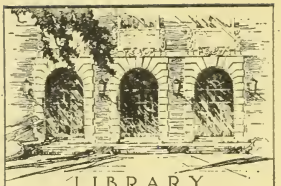

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF

THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, TRECOTHICK BOWER, MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB, &c. &c.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy. BEATTIE.

VOL. IV.

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

CHAPTER I.

" Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity."

EAGERLY Fidelia joined Mrs. Stovendale at the breakfast-table, almost expecting to find Albina there awaiting her. No Albina, however, was there; but scarcely was she seated, ere a loud knock was heard, and Hastings and Dundonald came flying up stairs. And here it may be necessary to observe, that Fidelia was so confident of being vindicated, in the opi-

nion of the latter, of the deception she had been accused of, by the explanation she had given his sister, that she felt neither agitation nor confusion at the idea of seeing him, and accordingly started up on his entrance with Hastings, and, with sparkling eyes, advanced to meet both.

Hastings most affectionately welcomed her to Bath; but Dundonald, far from imitating his example, drew back from her extended hand, as if he had not seen it, and, with a stiff inclination of his head, took a chair beside Mrs. Stovendale at the table.

Fidelia was more than surprised—she was hurt; but, recollecting he was an egregious puppy, she tried to impute his present conduct entirely to that. Accordingly, on Hastings's stepping out to the head of the stairs, to give some message to the servant he had suddenly recollected, the inquiry she had been on the point of addressing to him respecting Albina, she turned to address to Dundonald.

"Albina! Albina!" he repeated, in a tone the most affected (for as his recent repentance vanished, all his usual puppyism and conceit returned)—"'pon honour! I don't understand you—don't exactly know who you mean."

"Not know who I mean!" said Fidelia, highly provoked by his manner: "why, your sister, to be sure—Miss Dundonald. Shall I see her this morning?"

"Oh! ah! now I comprehend. Can't say, indeed, not having the honour of being always acquainted with her arrangements." Then turning to Mrs. Stovendale—"Your *boulanger* absolutely deserves immortality, my dear madam," he said, "for the famous rolls he makes!—what adorable butter too!—and the honey one would suppose just rifled from the hives of the bees on Mount Hybla. But have you heard the news? At all——"

"Oh, spare me!" said Mrs. Stovendale, laughing; "a twice-told tale is bad enough, but a thrice-told one is not endurable; we

had it last night from Mrs. Clackit and Mrs. Rookby."

"Oh, the Bath publishers, as they are styled. The old frights!—quiz me, if I don't hate to see their withered phizzes, like *memento moris*, wherever one goes."

Hastings now returning, Fidelia impatiently addressed to him the inquiry she had just made to the other, namely, whether she should not see Albina that morning?

"See her!" he repeated with emphasis: "undoubtedly; and I almost wonder——"

Here, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he paused; but Fidelia guessed what he would have said. She too wondered that they had not yet met. In vain she tried to reflect, that Albina, at present, was not her own mistress. Surely, on such an occasion as to welcome a beloved friend, she might have been allowed to excuse herself a little while. But did she, could she doubt her regard?—did she believe that any circumstance could estrange that

heart that had ever been so affectionate, so grateful, so sincere in its attachments, from her? Oh no! and the tears that were stealing down her cheeks at the surmise were dashed away with something like a feeling of indignant reproach for having even for a moment admitted it. Whether her emotion was noticed or not by the rest of the party, she did not know.

Soon after breakfast, during which Dundonald gave his tongue no respite, both gentlemen rose to depart, being under an engagement elsewhere. As they were retiring—"Well, I may hope?" said Fidelia, expressively, and trying to force a smile to Hastings.

"Assuredly," he cried, perfectly comprehending what she meant.

"At what hour, ma'am," asked the impatient Fidelia, some minutes after he was gone, "do you think it likely I may see Albina?"

Mrs. Stovendale declared she could not

tell; and at last, instead of waiting at home for her, proposed their going to lady De Bellemont's, adding, she wished to call on her ladyship. Nothing likely to hasten the expected meeting could be unpleasant to Fidelia; accordingly with delight she assented to this proposal.

Lady De Bellemont's residence was in the Upper Crescent; this she considered her fixed one, being fond of the amusements of Bath. Immediately on their return to England, lady Caroline, with Miss Slaney, had left her to pay a visit in the North to some relations of the general, so that, at present, she had only the young people she had brought over from Rock Fort with her.

Her ladyship was now at home, and on being conducted to her, her visitors found her alone, and quietly seated at her work-table in her dressing-room. The ceremony of introducing Fidelia over, Mrs. Stovendale proceeded to say, she hoped her ladyship had had the goodness to excuse the

hasty apology she sent her the preceding day, and would also accept the one she now came in person to make, for not dining with her on that day?

"Oh no, certainly not!" returned the countess. "This is really being too ceremonious. I guess your reason for trying to excuse yourself; but surely you might have brought the young person without my desiring you?—Miss Hawthorn, I invite you to dinner, so your friend will not be able to persist in her refusal to come."

Fidelia bowed, and as she thanked her ladyship for the honour conferred, begged to be understood as referring herself to Mrs. Stovendale; but almost mechanically she did so, for from what had occurred, it was evident there had been some hesitation about introducing or receiving her as a visitor; and perhaps to an apprehension that there ought or would, might be owing the letter, which she was now convinced had been written to put her off from coming for some time.—"Oh! why,

why," in the agony of wounded pride, she cried to herself, " did I not resist the obstinacy of the Bryerlys!" Her throat swelled, tears started, and she hastily turned to a window to conceal her emotion.

But it was not unperceived by Mrs. Stovendale, and rising, under the pretext of pointing out a prospect to her, she pressed her hand affectionately. The cold, the sinking heart of the poor afflicted, was revived by this pressure, and she tried to hope. She was what the unhappy and dependent are too often considered—too sensitive, too easily alarmed.

Having recovered from her emotion, her thoughts reverted to her friend, and an earnestly supplicating look to Mrs. Stovendale, as she resumed her seat, induced that lady to inquire of the countess, whether Albina and Miss Clinton were at home?

" Oh no," she replied; they were gone out, about half-an-hour before, in the chariot, to pay some visits.

"Oh, then we have missed her!" involuntarily exclaimed the disappointed Fidelia.

"What, did you expect to see her? But I know it was not her intention to call this morning at Mrs. Stovendale's; the visits she and Miss Clinton are gone to pay are quite in a contrary direction."

Not her intention to call on her!—was it then declared, announced? Again an unutterable pang pervaded the feelings of Fidelia. Oh! was this what she had expected from her dear Albina?—was this the joy she had anticipated from the announcement of her arrival to her?—was this the way in which she would have acted, if similarly situated, to her? Oh! literally on the wings of friendship would she have flown to embrace, to enfold her to her heart—to speak the words of peace and kindness to her agitated mind—"But can it be," she again demanded of herself, "that her regard is weakened?—Oh no! I feel that I wrong her by the suspicion—

that for this seeming unkindness she will be able to account."

She was roused from her abstraction by the opening of the door. Languidly she turned her head to see who was entering, and, to her unutterable, her agitating surprise (for of his being at Bath, from the silence observed respecting him, she had no idea), beheld Grandison.

He was advancing to speak to Mrs. Stovendale, when his eye turned on her; and, from the emotion he betrayed at the instant, it was evident that he had been as ignorant of her being there as she was of his. For a moment he looked as if doubting the evidence of his eyes; then hastening to her, with those glowing smiles that gave such radiancy to his countenance, he took her hand, and as he kissed it, expressed his delight at this unexpected pleasure.

Fidelia, in the fulness of her delighted heart, almost sighed her gratitude. Yes, she was indeed grateful, indeed flattered,

to find that there was one being by whom she was remembered.

He was proceeding to question her relative to her arrival, when the countess interrupted him, to say she had thought that before this he had followed, as he promised, the ladies.

"I don't know how it happened," he replied, "that I did not: but perhaps it was owing to my having a presentiment," and he glanced smilingly and expressively at the blushing Fidelia, "of the pleasure that awaited me here."

"Oh, perhaps so," rather drily returned the dowager. "Pray, may I ask how long you and this young lady have been acquainted?"

"Oh, not quite an age," he replied, "though quite long enough, I assure you, to prevent my considering her in the light of a common acquaintance; so my joy at seeing her was but natural. But *adieu et allons*—I must keep my engagement: but

I take myself off in the delightful hope of our all meeting again in the course of the day."

Mrs. Stovendale only waited till she thought he was out of sight to take her leave. She and her companion had not got far, when the sound of a horse behind them made them turn, and they beheld him. He instantly dismounted, and giving it to his groom, joined them.

"So this is the way you keep your engagement?" said Mrs. Stovendale. "I thought you were going to meet Miss Dundonald and her companion?"

"So I was," he returned, laughing.

"Then, if such was, or be, your intention, you have taken a strange direction, exactly contrary to the one they are gone."

"No matter: perhaps I have a secret wish to exhibit myself on the *pavè* in Milsom-street to-day."

"Come, come—pray remount, and keep your engagement."

"No, positively, not immediately;" and taking a hand of each, he drew them under his arm.

"Well, I see," said Mrs. Stovendale, "you are determined at least to be the envy of Milsom-street this morning: but remember, I tell you in time, that if you do persist in being our escort, I shall give you no admittance when we get home."

"Cruel resolution! But if I can't coax you, perhaps I can Miss Hawthorn, to admit me to her *boudoir?*"

"Oh, I boast no *boudoir*," cried Fidelia.

"Well, since timely apprised of your determination not to let me in, from selfish motives, I'll certainly keep you out as long as I can." And this he certainly did. At length they reached Mrs. Stovendale's, and parted at the door, not urging an admission that would have prevented his keeping an engagement that politeness required he should not break.

The delight he had evinced at seeing

her dwelt upon the flattered mind of Fidelia, but not without a feeling of mortification at the silence observed relative to her arrival to him. Was it of so little consequence, then, in the opinion of those acquainted with it, as to be deemed not worth mentioning? But she tried to hope and believe she should find herself mistaken in this painful idea, as well as in many others equally so, that had involuntarily suggested themselves to her.

From what had occurred previously between her and Mrs. Stovendale respecting him, she almost feared this meeting would have revived the agitating topic: but the fear was needless; after merely mentioning him in the terms of admiration and esteem he merited, she retired to write her letters.

About six, the ladies set out in chairs for the Crescent. On entering the drawing-room, Fidelia's first glance was for Albina; but Albina was not there. In a few minutes, however, they must now meet,

and then all that tormented her would be dissipated like a cloud from the face of a summer sky. The annual migration of the O'Leary family to Bath had by this time taken place, and amongst the party now assembled they were not the least conspicuous. To find Fidelia in such company was quite sufficient to induce a belief of her being entitled to their notice; accordingly, they delayed not renewing their acquaintance with her.

"Vastly glad, upon my honour, to see you, my dear creature!" said her ladyship, "vastly glad indeed! You look charmingly—quite as divine as ever. No occasion," tapping her cheek with her fan, "to come to the fount of Hygeia here."

"Well, I declare mamma's good-nature does make her flatter so!" said Miss O'Leary, as her ladyship whirled off to speak to some one else. "I never saw you look so ill; you are really quite altered—might really, at a proper hour and place, pass for a castle spectre, or any other

ghostly beauty of renown—But that's no matter: I am quite delighted to see you—'twas so unexpected: but I suppose Miss Dundonald could not do without you? Did she mention us since you came?"

"No," rather evasively, perhaps, answered Fidelia; but she could not bring herself to give the mortifying explanation that would have undeceived them.

"What a delightful bustle the double weddings, and the coming of age of Miss Clinton at the same time, will occasion!" observed Miss Joyce. "Immediately after the ceremony, I understand the bridal party are to set off for her seat; thence, after passing the honeymoon, go up to London to be presented; then return to Ireland, to participate in the festivities of Rock Fort, and afterwards pay a visit to the Continent. 'Pon honour! I quite envy you the pleasure you have in view."

Fidelia sighed involuntarily. It was a delightful arrangement indeed; but what certainty was there of her being included

in it? There was no time, however, for her betraying a doubt on the subject, as otherwise she might have been led to do, other guests arriving, amongst which were Mrs. Clackit and Mrs. Rookby.

"The frightful inseparables! Heavens! how we shall be bored with these two old prosers!" Miss O'Leary exclaimed, as they entered. "I wonder lady De Bellemont can invite them so often to her parties: but she has such a predilection for every thing Irish!"

Notwithstanding the dislike and disgust thus evinced, both she and her sisters paid the greatest attention to what they were saying, certain of hearing something from them they should like to believe and detail.

"Has your ladyship heard the news?" began Mrs. Clackit, with her usual interrogation, to the countess.

"No, but I have read it," replied her ladyship, purposely affecting to misunderstand her; "and indeed, except it be of

consequence to know that the allied sovereigns danced *à la Polonaise* with so-and-so, or that the feathers of lady C—— were of a height to astonish the ball-room, or that the jewels of the princess of T—— were of a value to equally amaze and dazzle, there was very little interesting in it."

"Oh, my dear lady, I don't mean newspaper news, but domestic news—Bath news. Colonel Scamper has absolutely proposed for Miss Aimwell—I had it from indisputable authority; notwithstanding his high pretensions, preparations for the nuptials have already actually commenced."

"Oh, impossible! impossible! I really believe, my dear Mrs. Clackit, you sometimes dream these things," said lady O'Leary, flirting her fan with no little violence, irritated at the idea of a person being snapped up she had long wished to entrap for one of her daughters. "With his high pretensions, as you justly observe, it's utterly impossible that colonel Scamper could think of a girl of such *canaille* con-

nexions as Biddy Aimwell; not but that, I dare say, her odious aunt did all in her power to draw him in."

"Well, you may believe it or not, just as you please," said Mrs. Clackit; "all I know is, I saw an order for some of the wedding dresses."

"Then, indubitably, there must have been some very artful proceedings, for I perfectly recollect how he used to laugh at hearing her mother, with her Connaught brogue, talking of her cousin Nickey, and saying, 'if she stood on her tippy toes, she couldn't please every one,' and of her two cousins Catto and Bridget, that kept a linen-draper's shop in some obscure part of Dublin."

"Oh, I know it right well; many a piece of linen I've bought there, and right good it was; and good and honest creatures they were, such as no one need think themselves disparaged by being connected with."

" Perhaps not—people differ in opinion: they may have been the exemplary spinsters you intimate; but, erratic as my wanderings may have been, as I never crossed their orbits, I cannot say from my own knowledge."

" Really! Why then, they said the very reverse—they said they knew you very well, for that you were a constant customer of theirs, and a right good bargainer, that there wasn't a person tried to beat them down more than you did."

" Oh dear!" colouring violently, and in manifest confusion, " what an assertion! Ay, now I recollect—I believe, about a thousand years ago, I did make my way once or twice to the horrible place they lived in, out of kindness to their connexions."

" How ungrateful people are! Why then, they would insinuate it was out of kindness to yourself, because you got things better and cheaper at their shop than you could elsewhere."

"Oh, ridiculous! Pray let us hear no more of the creatures.—I protest I am still incredulous about colonel Scamper."

"Oh, as to that, people are very apt to try and doubt the reality of what they dislike to believe."

"Dislike!" retorted lady O'Leary—"As to that, indeed! But, certainly, one can't help being vexed at so fine a young man as colonel Scamper throwing himself away upon such a girl as Miss Aimwell."

"Nay, she certainly is a sweet little being," interposed Mrs. Rookby, in her usual affected tones. "If she had less affectation, and more steadiness, and laid aside the immoderate use of rouge, and tried to cultivate her mind a little, and restrained her propensity to scandal and ill-nature, I don't know where you would see a more amiable creature."

"Ha! ha!" vociferated one of the gentlemen present. "Faith, my dear ma'am, according to your definition, it would

be here, as the coachman said to Pope, easier to make than to mend."

Here the conversation was a little interrupted by the drawing-room door being thrown open, and Miss Clinton and Albina, closely followed by Hastings and Dundonald, made their *entrée.*

Forgetting every thing but joy at beholding her, Fidelia with difficulty prevented herself from springing forward to meet her friend. Some minutes elapsed ere Albina seemed to see her. Not so Miss Clinton : from the moment she entered, her eye was turned disdainfully upon her. At last, however, Albina turned, and approached her. As she advanced, Fidelia, starting up, extended her hand, while, with eyes swimming in tears, she softly exclaimed—"Oh! how I have longed for this minute!"

Albina returned the pressure of her hand, and smiled, but it was but faintly. Fidelia now tried to make room for her

between herself and one of the Miss O'Learys, who had all crowded upon her; and Albina was just taking the offered seat, when Dundonald, who had all the time been watching her as he stood leaning on the back of the seat Miss Clinton had taken, called to her to come to them, as Miss Clinton had something to say to her. She instantly obeyed, and taking the seat pointed out to her by the haughty Fergus, looked no more towards Fidelia.

Only those similarly disappointed can possibly conceive what she felt at this moment. Her bosom swelled almost to bursting, and only by a strenuous effort she could prevent herself from bursting into tears. Whatever the affection of Albina might have been for her, she saw an estrangement with regard to her had been effected. In what way had she merited this? Oh! in thought, in word, in deed, she knew she never had offended her: to a natural inconstancy of disposition, then, it must be owing. Oh! was it, then, all

come to this, after the many circumstances that should have endeared and bound them for ever to each other? Her cheeks now flushed with an unmerited sense of injury, now grew cold and wan with sorrow—deceived by her dearest friend, by her whose languid head her arm had pillowed in sickness, over whom she had watched with all the tender solicitude of sisterly affection, where was there comfort or hope for her anguished spirit? Should she write to remonstrate with her on the subject? But no! apprehensive and indignant pride made her relinquish the idea. Situated as she was, she feared it might be imputed to motives she disdained. She thought she could now account for what had before perplexed her, namely, Mrs. Stovendale's evidently-betrayed wish she had not come so soon—a suspicion of the alteration of Albina's sentiments with regard to her, and a consequent desire to keep her out of the way till Albina had quitted Bath—"But by coming as I have,"

she added, " what have I done, but anticipate the shock which at any period I must have experienced from the discovery of that alteration."

Again, with terror, she thought of being compelled to seek a refuge amongst strangers; for, situated as matters now were, she could not think of remaining with Mrs. Stovendale, liable, as her doing so would be, to throw her continually in the way of her altered friend. Lost in these painful thoughts, she forgot the observation to which she was exposed. The surprise of the Misses O'Leary at finding she had not, since her arrival till now, seen Albina, was not a little heightened by the very different deportment of the latter to her, to what they had supposed it would have been, from the friendship they had understood existed between them.

Far, however, from sympathizing with the too plainly shocked Fidelia, they exulted at the mortification she had met with; for all superior to themselves were

objects of hatred and envy. She deserved, they conceived, to be punished for her presumption, in attempting to intrude into company so superior to her; for from what they had witnessed, it appeared evident to them that she had come unbidden to Bath. Miss Dundonald was quite right to cut such a connexion; she could derive no possible advantage from it; but, on the contrary, perhaps experience mortification, men's tastes being so capricious, that they might possibly admire the impertinent creature more than herself. How provoking, that they should have been betrayed into condescension to her! but they determined she should not have long to boast of any thing of the kind. When, therefore, Fidelia, a little recollecting herself, and wishing to avoid the particularity of silence, lest it should lead to a suspicion of what was passing in her mind, made an effort to renew her conversation with them, they stared, as if her person had been suddenly metamorphosed, or their sense of

hearing suspended; and some girls they were intimate with just then entering, jumped up to meet them, and, forming a group with them at one of the windows, left her to her own mournful cogitations.

Nothing can be more awkward than a person being alone, as it were, in a room full of company, since they are apt, from the circumstance, to imagine the eye of every one directed towards them with surprise at it. From the embarrassment it occasioned, Fidelia was relieved, in a degree, by the approach of Hastings, who had hitherto been prevented by others from noticing her particularly; but he was not long allowed to remain by her, Dundonald maliciously contriving a frivolous pretext for calling him away.

At length Grandison entered. Oh! how pre-eminently noble did he appear! The eyes of Fidelia were involuntarily fastened on him; but with the admiration he excited, was mingled that kind of melancholy which hopelessness of notice

from the object admired occasions. She could not flatter herself that he would act contrary to the example set him by those on whose attention and kindness she had so much greater claim; that however a generous nature had impelled him to previous kindness to a desolate stranger, he would not speedily change his conduct.

With all the effect of surprise, then, was his suddenly breaking away from a group he began to converse with, to join her, on perceiving she was sitting by herself unattended. She blushed, and for a moment was at once too confused and agitated to know almost what he said.

Dinner was soon after announced. Fidelia, like every one else, rose on its being so, but continued stationary for a few minutes, with Grandison by her side, to let the other ladies pass.

Lady De Bellemont perceiving this as she advanced towards the door, leaning on sir Phelim, suddenly stopped, and addressing him in no very pleased accent, beg-

ged he would observe that none of the Miss O'Learys had an escort.

Immediately drawing the trembling hand of Fidelia under his arm, he bowed to her ladyship, and, with a significant smile, said—"That must be his apology for not before attending to the circumstance; but he had still an arm disengaged for any lady who would honour him by accepting it," turning, as he spoke, to the ladies she had mentioned; but, with an air of disdain at his preference of Fidelia, they all drew back from accepting what was thus offered, and, with an affected titter at something they pretended to whisper to each other, passed on to the staircase.

Acting as master of the mansion, Grandison could not at table continue to pay her exclusive attention; but he still continued to pay her sufficient to sooth her wounded feelings and excite envy. But on her return with the other ladies to the drawing-room, again she felt herself a solitary being—no one speaking to, no one

appearing to remark her, and again her heart felt bursting with grief and indignation at the cruel unkindness of her altered friend. But a short time before, did she think the period would ever have arrived, in which she should find herself in the same apartment with her, without venturing to address her.

Several of the gentlemen shortly followed, and the elder part of the company settled themselves to cards, while the younger repaired to another room to dance.

Fidelia attempted not to follow; no beckoning glance or good-natured smile invited her to do so. After remaining some time unnoticed and disconsolate, she was suddenly espied by Mrs. Clackit, who, with an exclamation of surprise at discovering her by herself, inquired whether she was doing penance, or not well, that she had not gone with the rest of the young people?

"How odd," said Mrs. Rookby; "but the fact is, I suppose, none of them asked

her, and so she thought it indecorous to follow. Poor thing, she looks very bashful indeed; but she must learn that, unlike the ladies of old, we are not now to always expect a gentleman-usher at our elbow to squire us about."

Fidelia blushed deeply, confused by the laugh and observation this remark excited —a remark so invidiously intended to make her appear a mere awkward, ignorant rustic. Not attempting to move, however, Mrs. Stovendale now spoke, to say she had better join the party in the other room.

Not knowing how to refuse, reluctantly she rose for the purpose; yet, when entering it, she found herself the general stare of all there. She repented not having persisted in remaining where she was, so embarrassed did she feel by the circumstance. Eagerly she sought the nearest seat, but obtained no relief from procuring it. Tea was just serving, and, of course, there was nothing to prevent the general attention being directed towards her.

Her half-averted eye wandered round for Hastings, as for a friend, who would, in a degree, relieve her from what she was enduring; but Hastings was not there. Some officers belonging to his regiment had just arrived at Bath, and he was called upon to pass the remainder of the evening with them.

Her situation was becoming so intolerable, she was thinking of a retreat, when Grandison entered. The scene now became changed; he was advancing to the upper end of the room, when, suddenly perceiving her, he turned, and took a seat beside her. Relieved by this from the overpowering awkwardness of her situation, Fidelia endeavoured, both out of gratitude to him, and to prevent any further triumph at her expence, to exert herself; for those capable of treating her with the cruelty she had been, would, she was convinced, exult at seeing her cast down.

Another set was now beginning to be formed; Grandison taking the hand of

Fidelia, as a thing of course, attempted to lead her out. She drew back, however; though she had forced herself to converse, she felt a further exertion, in the present state of her spirits, was more than she was equal to; but Grandison would not be refused, and, fearful if she appeared obstinate she might offend, she at length suffered him to lead her forward. Dundonald, with Miss Clinton and Albina, joined the set at the moment. The instant the former beheld Fidelia about making one of it, with a look of ineffable rage and contempt he drew back, and seizing the arm of Miss Clinton and his sister, in a tone that perfectly corresponded with this look, said, that since the set was not what he wished, they would wait till another was formed.

Fidelia trembled, and almost fainted; while Grandison, inflamed with indignation, fiercely demanded what he meant, adding, he did not comprehend him.

"Really, then, I am ready to explain."

" Then rely on it, I shall insist on your doing so."

" Oh, Heavens!" in an accent of indescribable terror, now exclaimed Albina, clinging to his arm, " Fergus, do you forget—— ?"

A kind of general confusion now pervaded the room. The gentlemen began to interfere, and the ladies to inveigh, and protest, and exclaim. The receding spirits of Fidelia were now utterly forsaking her, and she would probably have fallen, had not an exclamation from some one, that she was fainting, drawn the attention of Grandison upon her. He supported her to another apartment, where the usual restoratives were immediately administered. A violent gush of tears, as her head leaned against the throbbing bosom of her supporter, was the first symptom she gave of returning animation. When entirely recovered, he attempted to lead her back to the dancing-room.

Forcibly resisting this effort—" Oh, no,"

Fidelia exclaimed, half hiding her face, while tears burst forth again; "think not I will again suffer myself to be dragged forward to meet insolence and contempt! Oh, my God!" in agony she involuntarily continued, "what have I done to merit what I meet with? Is it because it has been thy Divine will to throw me an unconnected being upon the great theatre of life, that wherever I go, wherever I turn, I am destined to encounter rudeness and oppression?"

Grandison, the greatly-agitated Grandison, grasped her united hands in his; and as he pressed his lips to them, told her, if she did not wish to have what had occurred more seriously noticed than it had yet been, she would not let him have the pain of seeing her so affected by it.

Alarmed by this intimation—"I should be ungrateful indeed," replied Fidelia, "if I did not forget—ungrateful to you for the kind attentions, the—the——," she be-

came confused and hesitated, " the exertions you have made to make me do so."

" My attentions! ah! were they what—" then checking himself—" Since unpleasant to you to return to the other room, I will not longer urge you. And see," directing her attention to a window, " how beautifully the empress of the night rises above yon tall cliffs."

" Unpleasant indeed," said Fidelia; " and even were it not, how apt would such a scene as this be to attract and rivet one," taking a seat, as she spoke, in the window, which had been thrown up to give her air, and thus admitted from the balcony without, filled with the choicest plants and flowers, the most delicious fragrance.

" I never see a scene like this," said Grandison, as he stood by her, " that I do not think of Shakespeare's Jessica and Lorenzo.—How sweet, like them, to sit upon a moonlight bank, and listen to the touches of soft harmony !"

"Inhaling such fragrance," cried Fidelia, "and courting thus the breath of heaven."

"Yes," said Grandison,

> "From some green Eden of the deep,
> Where pleasure's sigh alone is heard,
> Where tears of rapture lovers shed,
> Endear'd, undoubting, undeceiv'd."

"Beautiful lines!" returned Fidelia. "But tenderness is one of the distinguishing qualities of their enchanting author."

The subjects that had been started gradually stole her from herself, when some of the gigglers from the adjoining room flounced in, but as suddenly drew back, with a malicious apology for their intrusion.

Fidelia instantly rose. A sickening apprehension of having done wrong, by remaining where she was, occurring—"Let me go," she cried, attempting to pass Grandison as she spoke.

"Assuredly," he said; "and pardon me for having allowed the selfish indulgence

of my own feelings to render me forgetful of what was due to yours." Then offering his arm, he led her directly to the drawing-room.

By this time most of the dancers had returned to it; and as Fidelia advanced into it, she saw many whispers and contemptuous glances exchanged at her expence. That they were also noticed by her companion, his flushed cheek evinced. He continued by her till the breaking up of the party, when returning home in chairs, and then immediately separating for the night, she had no opportunity of coming to any explanation with Mrs. Stovendale, such as she had decided on from the occurrences of the day.

CHAPTER II.

" Nought is there under Heaven's wide hollowness,
That moves more dear compassion of the mind,
Than beauty brought t'unworthy wretchedness,
By Envy's snares, or Fortune's freaks unkind."

THE melancholy she felt was too strongly impressed upon her countenance the next morning, not to be noticed by Mrs. Stovendale, and occasion an inquiry into the cause of it. Bursting into tears, Fidelia informed her, protesting she had such reason to believe herself an intruder in the society she had been introduced to the preceding day, that she could not bear the thought of entering it again, and accordingly begged Mrs. Stovendale to assist her in some plan for the future.

Mrs. Stovendale appeared both greatly disconcerted and affected by what she

heard. When a little recovered from the emotion it had excited, she told her, if she had that regard for her she professed, she would not touch upon the subject of leaving her at present.—" What your reasons are for the surmise that has so distressed you, I do not choose to inquire," she added: " whatever may be the conduct of others, I trust that mine has given no room for a doubt of my sincerity; and as a satisfactory proof to me that this is the case, I expect you'll comply with what I have requested. Recent occurrences never succeeded in diverting my thoughts from your interest, of evincing which, an opportunity will now, I conceive, speedily occur. Promise me, therefore," affectionately kissing her cheek, " to remain quietly here, nor decline accompanying me wherever I go, as your staying behind might have the injurious effect of lessening the consequence I wish you to be thought of."

Thus urged, Fidelia could not refuse; yet with secret repugnance did she give the

required promise; but when she thought of what she would have suffered, had Mrs. Stovendale readily consented to part with her, she wondered at this repugnance, and, in sudden joy at having so assured a friend, felt herself revived. Why Mrs. Stovendale had not been more particular in inquiring into the wish she had expressed, she readily conceived; and both from the consideration of the tie that was shortly to connect them, and a feeling of lingering tenderness for Albina, resolved never to be more explicit with her on the subject.

They were sitting chatting together after breakfast, when a loud knock announced visitors, and lady O'Leary and her daughters made their appearance, with a party they had collected by the way, consisting of Grandison, Dundonald, two or three female dashers, and a similar number of male exquisites.

"Oh, my dear friend," cried her ladyship, bursting, rather than walking, into the room, "what a charming arrangement

this is! how infinitely obliged are the girls to the two sweet brides-elect, for choosing them for bridemaids! Captain Dundonald brought their request early this morning: what a charming group will be formed at the altar! But can you give me an intimation of what the dresses of the brides will be? for I should like to have those of the girls correspond in a degree, as uniformity in some instances heightens effect."

"I really can't tell," replied Mrs. Stovendale, coolly.

"Oh, well, no matter, we can ask at the Crescent, which in the first instance I should have done, but that I wished to save time. But that's true, my dear soul, can you tell me who the fourth bridemaid will be?"

"No, really, except——" glancing involuntarily at Fidelia.

"But I can, ma'am," said Dundonald, perfectly comprehending the glance of Mrs. Stovendale; "Miss Leslie is engaged to complete the number."

"Oh, very good! very good! a sweet girl, about the height of Alice! I think they must walk together."

"Walk together!" repeated one of the dashers, with a loud laugh, that was echoed by her companions; "why, dear ma'am, you talk as if it was a public procession you were arranging!"

"Well, Miss, and so I dare say it will, from the numerous friends and connexions of the parties."

"Mamma, pray, mamma," at this instant exclaimed Miss O'Leary, "have you your *eau-de-luce* in your ridicule?"

"Lord, child, why—are you ill?"

"Oh dear, no—not I! but Miss Hawthorn has turned so pale."

"I beg your pardon, I am not ill," faltered out Fidelia.

The invidious notice thus drawn upon her caused her to make an effort to overcome her emotion—an emotion caused by the complete proof this arrangement re-

specting the bridemaids afforded of the entire estrangement of Albina.

To have a pretext for avoiding the looks she saw directed towards her, or rather concealing her own, in a degree, from observation, she resumed the pencil, with which she had been trying to make a sketch of some of the adjacent scenery previous to the arrival of the party. A Miss Gayville, looking over her, asked if she had ever been to Westmoreland; adding, there, indeed, was scenery worth sketching.

To this question Fidelia replied in the negative, at the same time expressing the gratification she should derive from the view of such romantic grandeur.

"Oh well, it's one, to be sure, you'll soon now enjoy," returned the other, alluding to the excursion planned for the bridal party to a seat of Miss Clinton's there.

"So I suppose," said Fidelia, conclud-

ing from the conversation that passed between her and Mrs. Stovendale that morning, that it was intended she should accompany her wherever she went, "for I understand Miss Clinton's house is there."

"Assuredly," cried Dundonald, drawing his chair close to the table, and, with his arms resting on it, sternly staring her in the face; "but this is the first intimation I have received of your intending to honour her with your presence there. There must be some mistake in the affair; for the fact is, her party will be so select, that the favour you intend her must indubitably be declined."

The revulsion occasioned by this rudeness—a rudeness so cruelly intended, not merely to lessen her in the eyes of others, but her own, completely overcame Fidelia. She tried to look up with a smile of contempt; but her feelings were not to be controlled, and hastily rising, she precipitately withdrew. Trembling in every limb, she eagerly turned into an adjoining

sitting-room, where, throwing herself upon a seat, she gave way to an agony of conflicting feelings.

In this state she was surprised by Grandison, who, with a look of denouncing indignation at the unfeeling Fergus, had hastily followed, unnoticed by Mrs. Stovendale, owing to the manner in which lady O'Leary had contrived to engage her at the moment.

With a feeling of self-degradation, Fidelia made an effort to escape; but he prevented her, and in a reproachful tone—"What, then," he demanded, "am I to suffer for the outrages of others? Is this just—is this kind? Does Miss Hawthorn think so unworthily of me, as to conceive I view with unconcern what I have witnessed? Yet well may she suppose so indeed, if longer I suffer such insolence to pass unresented! by Heaven, it shall be atoned for! this unmanly, this brutal conduct shall no longer be endured!"

Terror seized Fidelia. Oh! should she

be the means of creating hostility, of bringing two such haughty spirits in contact with each other!—"Hear me!" she cried, grasping his arm. "If you regard me—" she paused—she blushed.—(This was not an expression to have been made use of.) "I am so agitated, I—I scarcely know what I say," she said, in indescribable confusion. "I meant to say, if you pity me—"

"Oh, no!" eagerly interrupted Grandison. "Appeal to me by that sweet word you first used—put my regard to the test, and what is there you may not command?"

"Your pity, your generosity, I put to the test," said Fidelia, recovering herself. "By these I conjure you not to add to the unhappiness of a being so forlorn, by any resentful notice of captain Dundonald's conduct; you could not do so without an interruption to the harmony that at this precise period it would be terrible to interrupt, or drawing upon me censure and ill-will. In compassion, therefore, promise that you will overlook his inhumanity;

'tis probable I shall not be much longer exposed to it; but, in the interim, ere I know what the final arrangements of Mrs. Stovendale are, should you persevere in your anger, I shall certainly withdraw from her protection, convinced my remaining under it could no longer be agreeable."

Grandison hesitated. Her arguments certainly had weight; but then how could he control the indignant feelings of his soul?—how suffer the conduct she had experienced to pass unpunished? But then, at this precise period, as she stated, should any thing unpleasant occur, what strictures, what incalculable mischief, might be the consequence! At length he suffered himself to enter into a compromise with his feelings, by promising that once more he would try to forget what had occurred.

Gratefully did Fidelia thank him for this promise—gratefully, as well as involuntarily, did she thank him for his attentions—for the interest he evinced about her.

"Oh! who almost could know you, and

not feel that interest?" He took her hand.

It was a critical moment. All the caution, the reserve, he had decided on maintaining, till satisfied on a few further points, was vanishing, when Mrs. Stovendale abruptly entered, released at last by the departure of the visiting party, and, in a tone of alarm, demanded what was the matter?

Some explanation was obliged to be given, and this was undertaken by Fidelia, Grandison disdaining to gloss over the affair, as she tried to do. But on his departure, which was shortly after, being too much disconcerted to be able to converse with pleasure, she could not avoid being more explicit, and, with astonishment, Mrs. Stovendale heard of the conduct of Dundonald; but it was an astonishment mingled more with alarm than even indignation: it was utterly impossible, she conceived, that mere conceit, mere puppyism, could have given rise to any thing of the kind, and much she feared in conse-

quence there was yet some storm pending over the defenceless head she tried to shield from danger.

The strange alteration in the sentiments of Albina tended to confirm this fear—strange, after all she had avowed for Fidelia. Yet while this led to believe there was some hidden cause for the insulting rudeness of one party, and the mysterious estrangement of the other, she thought so, without an idea to her prejudice. Of all that had once militated against her, in her opinion, she had fully acquitted herself, confirming her esteem and regard; but, alas! her evidence in her favour might not be of avail, if any thing serious were thought or meditated. Her distress on the subject was augmented by not having any one to open her mind to on it; for though Hastings was on the spot, she feared consulting him on it, lest, from the fraternal regard he had conceived for Fidelia, and the high estimation he held her in, her doing so might occasion some un-

fortunate misunderstanding between him and Fergus, well aware that a nature warm and generous as his would not be induced to restrain its feelings by selfish considerations.

She now wished she had persevered in trying to extract from Albina an explanation of the cause of her sudden coldness with regard to Fidelia, the discovery of which was indeed the reason of her endeavouring to prevent the latter from so immediately joining her at Bath; yet when she reflected on the manner in which Albina had shrunk from her inquiries, she almost believed her having done so would have been useless. Much as she delighted in the society of Fidelia, yet from what had now occurred, she resolved on no longer retaining her than till she could give her up to the protection she had long been assured of for her. Under this she tried to hope apprehended evils might be averted.

For the present the storm had passed

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away, and every thing unpleasant seemed to be forgotten. Fidelia resolved to keep a watch over her feelings, and though, of necessity, constantly in company with Dundonald, so carefully avoided him as to meet with nothing that could again distress her; but though continually in company, solitary would she have been, but for the persevering attentions of Grandison. Lonely and unobserved when he was not present, the moment he entered, the scene became changed; she then felt a kind of confidence in herself, that vanished the moment he was gone. This led to consider him in the light of a protector. Can it be wondered at, that every succeeding moment deepened the interest he had previously excited in her breast, that at the mere sound of his voice her heart fluttered and her cheeks crimsoned? But not exclusively to him would she have been indebted for attention, but that Hastings was under the necessity of absenting himself from the party, owing to the friends

who had lately arrived from Ireland being strangers at Bath, and meaning to make but a short stay there. Involuntarily her eyes and those of Albina sometimes encountered, but instantly were they withdrawn, with something of a look of confusion at each side.

Nearly a week had elapsed in this manner, when Mrs. Stovendale hastily entered the room, where Fidelia was sitting at work one morning after breakfast, and kissing her cheek with much emotion, proceeded to tell her she would now permit her to leave her, the lady to whose care she long since meant to confide her having intimated to her her being then ready to receive her.—"But it is necessary that I now enter into a little detail with you," she added, as she seated herself beside Fidelia. "Lady Oldbury is the second wife of my late father, who very unexpectedly came into possession of the title which she now bears—her fortune is

considerable, and in her own power; but the enjoyments it has the power of conferring, she is unable, from particular circumstances, to participate in. To try and divert a dejected mind, she has for some time past been ranging about, but with an intimation to me, that whenever I procured her the companion I held out a hope I should yet be able to obtain her, she would return to her residence in Wiltshire. Her melancholy habits incline her to retirement; but in taking you under her protection, it is by no means either her wish or intention to seclude you from society. As soon as the bustle of the approaching nuptials is over, I am to join you, and arrangements are then to be made for introducing you to notice, in the manner in which she knows you are entitled from—— that is, I mean," pursued Mrs. Stovendale, with that confusion which is evinced by a person who has spoken inadvertently, "in the manner which she wishes, from

the prepossession she has conceived for you—a prepossession which I am convinced you will confirm."

Great was the surprise of Fidelia at this communication—strange and various the conjectures it gave birth to. That the deep interest experienced for her was owing to a knowledge of her origin, she could not doubt—the words that had escaped Mrs. Stovendale indeed betrayed this; but equally evident to her was it, that the mystery appertaining to this was not intended to be explained. Why this should be the case puzzled and perplexed her; yet in vain she was convinced she should inquire the reason—in vain remind Mrs. Stovendale of the indirect promise she had given her, to have all that had excited solicitude or curiosity yet accounted for. With this conviction, to give utterance to the entreaty that was bursting from her lips, would indeed, she conceived, be ridiculous; yet with difficulty did she suppress it—with difficulty forbear kneeling

to implore Mrs. Stovendale to disclose all she knew.

Trying, since persuaded it would be useless to forget she had such an inquiry to make, she endeavoured to feel only happy at what she had heard; but in vain; not even the idea of being relieved from the pain she suffered in the company of Albina, could reconcile her to the thought of being separated from Mrs. Stovendale—of (she could not deny it to herself) being no longer in the way of seeing Grandison—of receiving those kind, those tender attentions, that had so soothed, so calmed her agitated mind, and cheered her sinking spirits.

But she was not long permitted to brood over the idea; Mrs. Stovendale purposing to take her directly to lady Oldbury's, immediate preparations were requisite for her departure. These were scarcely made ere the chaise ordered for the short journey was announced.

A drive of about ten miles terminated

this; the last two or three of which led through the venerable woods that environed the noble but ancient mansion of lady Oldbury, admitting, through various breaks, views of the more distant scenery and of the public road.

The agitation of Fidelia as she drew near her destination was inexpressible. Should she not succeed in confirming lady Oldbury her friend, how disappointed would Mrs. Stovendale be! yet should she do so, how unhappy perhaps might she be rendered herself by being obliged to remain with her!

Trembling, she followed Mrs. Stovendale to the apartment to which they were ushered. There sat lady Oldbury, advanced in years, but still evidently, from her ashy cheek and emaciated form, more injured by sorrow and ill health than even time; but pale as she was at their entrance, this paleness was nothing to the deadly hue that overspread her countenance, when, having welcomed her back to Eng-

land, Mrs. Stovendale turned to present Fidelia; she attempted to stretch out her hand to her, but in the effort it fell apparently lifeless on the arm of the couch on which she was sitting, and, with a deep groan, she sunk back almost fainting. Assistance was immediately summoned; an old Irish housekeeper entered with restoratives, and while applying them, Mrs. Stovendale, shewing Fidelia to another apartment, told her she would return for her as soon as lady Oldbury was recovered.

How strange appeared to Fidelia what she had witnessed! for that to the effect her sight had upon her was owing the sudden indisposition of lady Oldbury, she could not doubt; her change of countenance the instant she cast her eyes upon her testified this. Would what was so perplexing ever be explained? Could Mrs. Stovendale suppose she would be satisfied to remain in ignorance? yet to press for the particulars necessary to elu-

cidate it, might it not be to place her in a situation of cruel embarrassment?

While undecided how to act, whether or not to urge what she was so solicitous for, Mrs. Stovendale rejoined her, and telling her lady Oldbury was recovered, led her back directly to her. The welcome that had previously faltered on her pale lips, her ladyship now gave her. Motioning her to take a seat beside her, she kissed her cheek, and while a faint smile beamed over her pallid features, told her, she hoped she knew it was from no selfish motive she had desired her company.—"It shall be my study," she said, "to evince this; but in the meantime, till Mrs. Stovendale is at liberty to introduce you to those enjoyments I have renounced, I hope you will be able to reconcile yourself to retirement."

"Reconcile!" repeated Fidelia, involuntarily; "ah, madam, there needs no effort to reconcile me to what unhappy circumstances have long rendered desirable! The

shade of privacy must ever be welcome to those who look in vain abroad for kindred ties."

"Come, come!" said Mrs. Stovendale, hastily, as if afraid something unpleasant might occur from further pursuing this theme. "Life is so varied by trials, that when any thing occurs that may alleviate their bitterness, we should gratefully avail ourselves of it, without reverting to what is distressing."

Refreshments were brought in, and while partaking of them, Mrs. Stovendale endeavoured to introduce a less particular conversation. Lady Oldbury seemed to wish to second her effort, but evidently with pain and difficulty. She had indeed quite the appearance of a person incapable of taking an interest in any of the common occurrences or topics of life—of a person that seemed to be the prey of some absorbing sorrow, some hidden care.

At length Mrs. Stovendale rose to depart. Fidelia had been trying to collect

herself for this moment; but when she actually saw her rise to be gone, tears burst from her. It might be longer than she imagined ere she saw her again, and till then she might remain ignorant of all she wished to know—how her sudden departure was borne—whether she was really missed by Grandison, or a thought bestowed on her by any of the party. Yet could she write to her, and not mention this?—"Oh, will you not let me hear from you soon—immediately?" she cried, as she almost clung to her as she was about going.

"Immediately!" repeated Mrs. Stovendale, laughing, or affecting to laugh, "what, to satisfy you I have got safe to the end of my perilous journey? Well, you shall; to-morrow you may expect a letter from me."

"Then I shall long for to-morrow," said Fidelia emphatically, and still holding her hand, as if a little longer to detain her.

Pausing on the stairs, to which she had

accompanied her, Mrs. Stovendale, while she affectionately embraced her, conjured her to collect herself, and not let any thing appear that could lead lady Oldbury to believe her unhappy or dissatisfied—"Not from any fear I entertain," she added, "of her being offended by the circumstance, but because I know the effect such an idea would have upon her would be distressing to you."

This kind of appeal to her humanity had the desired effect. Fidelia endeavoured to rally her spirits, in order to prevent any renewal of those painful feelings that had so evidently overpowered lady Oldbury on her introduction to her. The dim eye of age, glazed with tears, was to her inexpressibly affecting—the languor of years, heightened by that of sorrow, painful in the extreme.

She was not compelled, however, to put a continual constraint upon herself. Deep fits of abstraction on the part of lady Oldbury permitted her at times the melan-

choly indulgence of her own feelings. When they did converse, it was on subjects entirely foreign to those immediately interesting to her. To the manner in which she had been introduced to Mrs. Stovendale, or to any previous occurrence, not the slightest allusion was made, to her great surprise, as she naturally concluded, from the interest she expressed for her, lady Oldbury would have inquired into these; and, from her silence on these points, it seemed to her as if either she was already acquainted with them, or else had some particular reason for fearing to recur to them.

Ere they separated for the night, her ladyship put into her hand a pocketbook, containing notes to some amount, with a request to dispose of them as she pleased, "as in taking her under her protection," she added, "she had done so with an intention of giving her every enjoyment and advantage in her power to bestow."

"Good God!" musing in her chamber

on this declaration, burst from Fidelia, "what is the claim I have upon her?—what, unknown as it is, the motive that makes her thus indirectly acknowledge it?"

She had scarcely entered the breakfast-parlour the next morning, when Mrs. Delany the housekeeper entered, to say her lady wished to see her. She accordingly repaired with her to her chamber, where she found her not risen. On seeing her, lady Oldbury extended her faded hand; and having greeted her with the salutations of the morning, said, she had sent for her, to make an excuse for not joining her at breakfast, owing to the excessive languor she felt from the agitation of the preceding day. In the course of a few hours, however, she added, she hoped she should be able to rise, and, in the meantime, that she would be able to amuse herself, either by walking, reading, or viewing the house, which she was sure, she said, Delany would have great pleasure in shewing her.

To walk, however, was at present the most agreeable way of whiling away the time to Fidelia; accordingly, after breakfast, she strolled out on the lawn, which, covered with the finest verdure, extended between magnificent woods to the road-side. In all she now saw, there was an air of impressive grandeur, but at the same time of stillness, of solitude, chilling to the feelings. Scarce a sportive deer was seen through the trees, nor a sound heard, save the stroke of a woodman, or the shrill bark of his attendant dog. It seemed to her that, as if yielding to her deep melancholy, lady Oldbury had wished to banish from her immediate vicinity all that could interrupt it, or give a turn to her thoughts.

Had she previously been inclined to doubt the constant and common assertion, of fortune alone being incompetent to confer happiness, she would now have been convinced of its truth—now that, in the infelicity of the mistress of this noble seat, she saw an exemplification of it.

What a proof that wealth, or indications of opulence, should not excite envy! that the couch of luxury is not always the bed of repose, or the perfumed chambers of the great the retreats of peace and happiness! that an undivulged crime will shed gloom and poison over every enjoyment! and to such a cause was the unhappiness of her present protectress to be imputed? She shrunk from giving way to the fearful thought, and yet, spite of her efforts, it would recur—spite of herself she could not banish the idea, that her conduct to her was more owing to the effects of remorse, than the instigations of humanity.

Yet how could she have injured her? Her meditations on the subject were interrupted by the approach of Mrs. Delany with a letter from Mrs. Stovendale. Eagerly it was taken, and as eagerly perused; but in vain her eye ran over it for the name so interesting to her. Not the slightest allusion was made to Grandison, nor to any of the rest of the party—a cir-

cumstance that vexed and mortified her still more, from Mrs. Stovendale mentioning at the conclusion the arrival of lord Castle Dermot at Bath.

"To mention to me a person I cared not about," she said to herself, as she folded up the letter, "and yet be silent with regard to——" but she was interrupted in the angry reflection by Mrs. Delany telling her there was a shower coming on.

As they hastened back to the house, Fidelia inquired how her lady was; and was informed, a little better, though still too poorly to rise—"So you must try to amuse yourself as well as you can by yourself, Miss," added Mrs. Delany; "but, laws! I fear much this will prove but a melancholy place for you, at least till Mrs. Stovendale comes here: we that are old find it so; so no wonder then that the young should. To be sure, 'tis a fine grand place; but as to that, my lady has as fine a seat as one need wish to clap eyes on in her own country, and musha! Miss,

but it's a shame almost for people to be leaving their own; to be sure there was a reason for my lady's doing so; but still I don't see she is happier elsewhere than there; the only thing is, she's out of the way here of hearing people's talk. God help us! 'tis well. for those that needn't care for what any one sees!"

Here was an opening for Fidelia to make the inquiries she wished; but it struck her there would be something so indelicate, so insidious, in addressing them to a domestic, that she forced herself to resist the temptation.

On re-entering the house, she was turning with a melancholy air into a sitting-room, when Delany asked her, whether it might not amuse her to view it? adding, it was a fine ould ancient place, that many strangers came to see. Fidelia gladly consented, pleased to have any thing that could divert her thoughts at the moment. Delany proved a tolerably good cicerone, and would have been a better one, had her

explanations been less interrupted by allusions to her lady's Irish seat. Fidelia, however, was much pleased by following her through the various chambers and galleries she threw open to her view.

The house had long been in possession of an illustrious family, and, with most of the old-fashioned but magnificent furniture, together with many of the original ornaments, had been purchased by lady Oldbury after the decease of her late lord. —" God knows it wanted for nothing when she got it!" observed Delany; " yet she wasn't satisfied till she had nearly stripped the place in Ireland of all that was grand and fine to bring over here. And see, Miss," throwing open the door of another apartment as she spoke, " are not the pictures here as handsome and natural as those I have just shewn you, though they are not quite so much talked of?"

Advancing into the room, Fidelia cast her eyes round it. That the pictures it was hung with were not quite as natural

as those she had been viewing, she did not attempt to deny, being chiefly portraits of private individuals; but that in any other respect they were equally entitled to notice, she would not perhaps have as readily granted.

Having glanced at them, she was returning to the gallery where some historical ones had engaged her attention, when her eye was caught by a full-length portrait of a young man. It was not only better executed than the others, but there was something in the features that made them appear familiar to her. While striving to think to whom they bore a resemblance, the exile occurred to her recollection. Allowing for the difference a few years make, nothing could be more like than this picture to him—the same the grandeur and elegance of the form, the intelligence of the countenance, and noble manliness of the brow.

"That picture seems to have taken your fancy, Miss," said Delany, after watching

her fixed examination of it for some minutes; "but no wonder, 'tis so handsome: handsome as it is, however, he that it was done for was still more so."

"You know the original then?" said Fidelia.

"Know him——! but, Miss—dear, don't say a word of this picture to my lady; it will only be bringing on a fit or so if you do."

"Is it the picture of a son?" asked Fidelia.

"Of a son!—ah then! is that all you know about the family? Did Mrs. Stovendale never mention to you, amongst the matters, to be sure, she must have told you of, the child that my lady persuaded her first husband, Mr. Winterfield, to adopt?"

"Good God!" in agitation inconceivable, from an idea that flashed upon her mind at this discovery, "was lady Oldbury Mrs. Winterfield?"

"Why then, didn't you know before? You never heard then either, I suppose,

any thing about the person this picture was drawn for?"

"Oh yes, I did. I have," said Fidelia; but trembling so, she was compelled to sit down—"I have heard that he was most unfortunate."

"Unfortunate! ah, the jewel! God forgive those that rendered him so! Nothing could be further from his nature than what sheer desperation drove him to: that was no matter, however; had he not escaped, he would just have suffered as if the guiltiest wretch on earth. Well for him, too, was it that he died soon, as well as escaped, else, perhaps, those that now think with pity of him might prove his cruel enemies; yet, poor soul! it was a pity he did without seeing his child."

"He had then a child?" almost wildly cried Fidelia. "But why did he not see it—why not know of it?"

"Why his foster-sister, who attended the mother, thought, if he knew of it, he wouldn't be for going to America without

it; and so, knowing the danger there would be either in his staying or taking it with him, she agreed with her husband that they should pretend it was dead. I don't, all things considered, blame Caty for deceiving him in the first instance about it; but when she went out to join her husband, some years after, in America, I think she might as well have taken it with her, as left it behind her to the mercy of strangers, for neither kith nor kin sought after the poor thing, only Mrs. Stovendale, whom Caty on no account would, for some reason or other of her own, give her to."

More, if inclined to communicate, she was prevented at present by the sudden fainting away of Fidelia at the moment.

Some minutes elapsed ere she came to herself; desiring the affrighted Delany then to say nothing of her sudden indisposition, she expressed a wish to repair to her chamber, and was accordingly sup-

ported thither, and at her earnest request left to herself.

CHAPTER III.

" Have I then no tears for thee, my father?
Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,
Thy tenderness for me? An eye still beam'd
With love—a brow that never knew a frown—
Nor a harsh word thy tongue—shall I for these
Repay thy stooping venerable age
With shame, disquiet, anguish and dishonour?
It must not be!"

But scarcely had Delany withdrawn, ere, starting from her recumbent attitude, Fidelia hastened to secure the door; then wringing her hands—" The delusions of hope and expectation are then for ever over," she cried; " the discovery of this morning sinks me to the earth; the child of an outlaw—a proscribed being—a denounced——" The rest was too terrible

to add. With a convulsive shudder she again flung herself upon the bed, and in wild laments gave way to the anguish of her distracted spirit.

She had often mused upon the relation made her at E—— by the exile, or, as we shall in future style him, Glenmore—mused on it with wonder at its minuteness to a stranger. But what had then appeared strange was now accounted for; she now discovered that he had a powerful reason for wishing to excite her sympathy. A suspicion of the truth had flashed upon her mind, at the instant of her learning the previous name of lady Oldbury, and the further particulars she received from Delany confirmed it beyond a doubt. Yes, the being whom she had so pitied, so admired, was her father—her father, who, yearning to behold her, yet so peculiarly situated as to be unable to discover himself, had taken this method of gratifying the longings of nature, and

awakening, unknown to herself, an interest in her bosom for him.

The agitation of lady Oldbury at beholding her, and her motive for adopting her, were now accounted for; but could this adoption, as doubtless was intended, make atonement for her injuries to him? Oh, no! her heart denied it, and shrunk with something of horror from owning obligations to the destroyer of her parent's peace. But why, why had he left it to chance to make the recent discovery to her? Why, when affectionately expressing the mere interest of humanity for her —why not avow the still deeper one of nature? Why, when he saw her tears falling for a supposed stranger, not declare the claim he had upon her feelings? Oh, could he suppose she would have shrunk back at the disclosure?—could he imagine she would have wanted energy of mind to follow him to other shores and other climes? That with some such hope he

had ventured to revisit the to him dangerous ones of Ireland, she could not doubt. —"And shall I suffer him," she cried, "to be disappointed in that hope—to return comfortless and dejected to his forlorn exile? No—the scene of that exile shall be my future country. I will oppose—I will stifle every feeling that can militate against this resolution. I will not act contrary to what appears the intention of Providence by this discovery, by hesitating to share his future destiny."

How to learn where he was, was now the point. Suddenly she bethought her of lord Castle Dermot; and what but a few minutes before had excited her petulance, namely, the communication of his being then at Bath, now filled her with gratitude and joy. Her father had said that he meant to repose confidence in him; it was natural therefore to suppose he would be able to give her the required information, and accordingly to him she decided on applying for it, but without as

signing the exact reason, lest every particular had not been communicated to him. But oh! when she thought of what she must relinquish, by quitting for ever the land of her nativity—the friendship, the converse, the attentions of the most amiable of men, her spirit almost died within her—her shuddering soul recoiled with terror and dismay. But could she brave the voice of nature—could she resist the claims of him whose noble form had prematurely faded in the depths of sorrow and of solitude? or could she hope that Grandison, proudly tenacious of his honour and his name—the heir of a house that had never yet known the degradation of an unworthy alliance—that he, her origin transpiring, as yet it must, would bestow another thought on her, if indeed he had ever yet entertained a serious one? And could this be doubted, that those tender, those unremitting attentions, so soothing, so delightful, were not instigated—impelled by something more than common

friendship? not for herself alone, therefore, would she have to weep the approaching dissolution of their acquaintance; no, her regrets for it would not be entirely selfish; she should have to mourn, to lament, being the cause of pain, of unhappiness to one of the noblest of human hearts; and must she resign the regard of such a heart? If she did not do so, called upon as she was, unworthy should she prove of ever having excited them.

For a few minutes she thought of disclosing to Mrs. Stovendale the discovery she had made, but was deterred by the suddenly-recollected assertion of Delany, that those who now pitied his fate might prove the cruel enemies of her father, if they knew him to be still in existence. Besides, upon consideration, without even this apprehension, she conceived, without his permission she had no right to make the disclosure. Within her own bosom, therefore, must be pent all she was now suffering—the consolation of obtaining

aid and advice in this exigence must be denied her.

But every minute was now precious, in order to prevent the risk of his quitting the kingdom without her. She therefore determined on immediately repairing to Bath, for the purpose of endeavouring to see lord Castle Dermot.

This resolution was no sooner taken, than rising from her recumbent attitude, she summoned Delany, and telling her she suddenly recollected having some purchases to make at Bath, begged she would intimate her wish to her lady to be allowed to go there that morning, and stay there perhaps a day or two.

Delany obeyed, and lady Oldbury being still too much indisposed to rise, gladly acceded to a request that freed her from all unpleasant restraint.

The carriage was accordingly ordered, and in the course of another two hours Fidelia found herself again in Bath: but on reaching Mrs. Stovendale's, how great was

her dismay, on learning, that owing to a slight accident the preceding night to lady De Bellemont, she had gone to her ladyship's, to take up her abode there for a few days, for the purpose of chaperoning the brides-elect in their respective engagements!

For a little while Fidelia hesitated how to act. She was most unwilling to obtrude at lady De Bellemont's; yet should she continue alone at Mrs. Stovendale's, she should probably defeat the purpose for which she had returned to Bath, that of meeting lord Castle Dermot. Accordingly she decided on repairing to the Crescent, though most reluctantly, most unwillingly; but there was no alternative, either to do so, or resign the chance she was so anxious for.

But she was fated to meet with every thing that could add to her present embarrassment or distress. On arriving at the Crescent, she was informed that Mrs. Sto-

vendale had just gone out with Miss Dundonald.

As soon as she had a little recovered from the feelings excited by not finding her there to receive her, and give her what might be called an introduction into the house, she desired to be shewn to her dressing-room. A servant was accordingly shewing her to it, when, in passing the apartment in which lady De Bellemont, together with Miss Clinton, Dundonald, and Grandison, was sitting, and which a rumour of her arrival had reached, the door was suddenly thrown open, and Grandison coming forth, seized her hand, and ere she well knew what he was about, led her into it.

The countess has already been represented as a selfish character; both her son, lord De Bellemont, and her daughter, lady Caroline Ayrcourt, had several daughters, and for some time back she had been speculating about Grandison for one of

them. The idea of this speculation being endangered she could not bear, consequently her reception of Fidelia, who she had reason to think was very likely at least to delay its accomplishment, was neither kind nor courteous.—"Why! what! is it really you that are come?" she cried, as Grandison led her into the room. "Why, bless me, child! wasn't it only yesterday Mrs. Stovendale took you to lady Oldbury?"

Confused by her manner, Fidelia was scarcely able to faintly reply in the affirmative to this question.

"Well, and what's brought you back so soon? Have you got tired already of her whims? Or has she changed her mind about keeping you? Neither is improbable."

"No, ma'am; neither is the case, I believe," said Fidelia, timidly; "but——"

"But what then?" demanded her ladyship, still more abruptly. "You couldn't

have any urgent business here, I should presume, after leaving it only yesterday?"

"Hem!" cried Dundonald at this assertion, and who all this while, without once moving at her entrance, had sat lolling back in his chair, playing with his watch-chain; "lord Castle Dermot arrived here yesterday; and no doubt the paper of the day announced him amongst the other fashionable arrivals."

"Lord Castle Dermot!" repeated the countess, indignantly. "I should hope she had too much good sense to bestow a thought on such a dissipated trifler. Tell me, child, did you know any thing of his being come?"

What a question!—or rather what an inference might be drawn from the answer she was compelled to give to it, after the cruel, the unmanly insinuation of Dundonald.—"I—I——" She paused, unable for an instant to proceed, from perceiving the eyes of Grandison fastened on her at

the moment, with an expression that seemed to say he wished to read her very inmost soul; then reflecting on the injurious surmises her confusion might create, the confirmation it might be of what was insinuated against her, she forced herself to reply as truth required, adding the manner in which she had obtained her information; and then pleading a slight faintness, begged to be allowed to retire to Mrs. Stovendale's chamber, there to wait for her.

Grandison, who had involuntarily, as it seemed to her, resigned her hand, on her replying to the last rude interrogation of her ladyship, now as involuntarily retook it, and in a voice that denoted, if a suspicion to her prejudice had for an instant started, it was dismissed, entreated, as he opened the door for her, and followed from the room, to know whether she was really much indisposed?

"No," she replied, blushing at the earnestness, the tenderness of the inquiry.

"Then suppose," said he, "as you cannot be fatigued with your ride, and the day is so delightfully fine, that you take a walk with me. You are doubtless anxious to see Mrs. Stovendale; and if you permit me the honour of escorting you, I think it likely we shall soon encounter her."

Fidelia thanked him for his kindness; but begged to be excused. She had many reasons for refusing his request; her spirits were too much agitated for conversation, and she wished henceforward to decline attentions that could now only be a source of anguish to her. But Grandison would not easily be refused.

They were arguing the point, when Dundonald came out from the drawing-room. He was descending the stairs, when a servant met him with a ticket; he read it aloud—"Lord Castle Dermot, Milsom-street. Ah, no doubt!" he exclaimed; "his old quarters. He wouldn't for the world be out of the scene of action." Then

carelessly—"Are you for a walk, colonel?" he said.

Grandison coldly replied in the negative; and Fidelia, disengaging her hand at the instant, retreated to the apartment previously shewn her as Mrs. Stovendale's.

But not to comment in her own mind on what had just passed, did she retreat thither. Scarce giving it a thought, she almost instantly decided on availing herself of the present opportunity to seek lord Castle Dermot; she had learnt where he lodged, and it was now the hour in which a fashionable lounger like him might be expected abroad. Should she now meet him, from being alone, there would be no restraint on the conversation she wished to have with him, and accordingly she determined on going out.

Having fully done so, with a beating heart she listened to ascertain the coast being clear, and then stealing down the stairs, let herself out, and bent her steps towards Milsom-street. But the agitation

of her spirits, lest of being overtaken or seen by any one she wished to avoid, rendered her hardly able to support herself.

This agitation was not lessened, when, on reaching Milsom-street, she found herself the general stare. In vain, by looking down, she tried to avoid the gaze of bold and audacious libertinism, what in the first instance allured, in the next emboldening, it being, not perhaps unnaturally, concluded, that if really what she affected to be, she would, on finding herself so annoyed, have retreated, instead of slowly turning on reaching the end of the street to retrace her steps, and accordingly that she was fair game. The way in which she was in consequence beset made her bitterly regret what she had done. In an agony of distress and confusion, she was endeavouring to extricate herself from the dilemma in which she found herself, when suddenly she encountered Grandison with a party of gentlemen.

To say which was most surprised at the

moment would be impossible.—" Good God! Miss Hawthorn," in a tone that almost denoted his doubting the evidence of his senses, " how little did I expect to meet you here, by yourself too, after so positively refusing to walk with me!" Then, not with a very complacent look at her annoyers, disengaging her from them, he begged to know, as they proceeded together, what could possibly have induced her to come out unattended?—delicately hinting the extreme impropriety of it in such a place.

Trembling with confusion, Fidelia stammered out something of having suddenly recollected being in want of some ribbon.

Could she not have dispatched one of lady De Bellemont's servants for it? he said.

Fidelia made no reply; and a milliner's shop being at hand at the instant, gladly made her way into it, in order to have a

pretext for evading questions that embarrassed her to agony.

But she could not entirely avoid remarks that had a similar tendency.—"Pardon me," whispered Grandison, availing himself of a crowd in the shop, to continue conversing with her; "I would not for worlds hurt your feelings; but really I am both vexed and offended, that instead of avowing to me your intention of coming out, when you must have known that I should have been but too happy to be your escort, you deceived me into a belief of your intending to seclude yourself till the return of Mrs. Stovendale."

Fidelia tried to reply—tried to thank him for his solicitude about her; but emotion choaked her utterance; her agitation was too excessive not to be noticed—a glass of water was procured her, and every attention paid that could sooth or calm her.

While smelling to some salts procured her from the mistress of the shop, Dun-

donald, with two fashionable belles he had just encountered on the *pavé*, entered. They visited at lady De Bellemont's, and of course knew Fidelia. The moment they now beheld her—"Lord, child!" they both exclaimed, almost in the same breath, "have you been much frightened? But what could you expect but something unpleasant from walking in such a street as this by yourself? Your disappointed beaux are vehemently protesting without they quite mistook you, or they never would have ventured——But perhaps you wanted a frolic, or wished for an adventure; some reason to be sure you must have had for doing a thing so strange."

Dundonald again hemmed as he had done in lady De Bellemont's dressing-room.—"This is about the hour, I believe," he added, "that lord Castle Dermot becomes visible."

At an allusion so plainly indicative of a suspicion of the real truth, the confusion of the persecuted Fidelia again became in-

describable. The consciousness of its being just, though the motive for her conduct was very different from what was supposed, nearly reduced her to the state from which she had just recovered. She did not dare to look up, lest of encountering the eyes of Grandison—she did not dare to look round, lest of meeting some invidious sneer or scornful smile.

The milliner, with a drawer of ribbons before her, now begged to know which she wanted?

"Oh, no matter; any will do," she replied, scarcely knowing what she said, from the extreme perturbation of her mind. But soon she was made sensible of the imprudence of this careless answer, and its tendency to confirm the cruel insinuation of Dundonald, by the look of mingled surprise and reproach which she caught at the moment from Grandison; after assigning to him, as a reason for her coming out, her wanting to make a purchase, and then appear so careless about it, what was it,

but to allow herself to be detected in a falsehood? Blushes of the deepest dye overspread her countenance at the thought, and again was she lost in confusion.

At length, in a cold constrained tone, Grandison told her, that having the happiness of seeing her perfectly recovered, he should now leave her; and slightly bowing as he spoke, instantly departed.

The eyes of Fidelia involuntarily followed him as he left her; on joining her, he had said that he would not quit her till he had seen her back to the Crescent; but now, even without an apology for the relinquishment of this intention, he did so. Her cruel persecutor, Dundonald, for in no other light could she now consider him, quickly followed, with his companions, impatient to join the fashionable loungers without; and immediately after Fidelia desired a chair to be got for her, fearful of again venturing out by herself after what had just occurred.

On quitting the chair, she was not a

little surprised at seeing Grandison in the hall, conceiving, from his manner at parting, he had then no immediate intention of returning. Their eyes encountered as she entered; but merely noticing her by a slight bow, he instantly averted his, and again appeared engaged in giving directions to a servant. A deep sigh stole from the tortured bosom of Fidelia, as she past him to the staircase, at inattention so contrary to what she had hitherto experienced from him.

Whether heard or not she knew not, but scarcely had she reached the landing-place, ere he was at her side, and gently taking her trembling hand, entreated to know whether she were indeed entirely recovered? The truth was, the invidious insinuation of Dundonald, or rather the kind of indirect corroboration it received from the manner in which she had acted, had greatly agitated him. Yet such was his confidence in her innocence—such the effect produced upon him by the mild de-

jection of her look as she passed him in the hall, and the sigh that issued from her heart penetrating to his, that a few minutes almost sufficed to calm his feelings on her account, and impel him to follow, to make every atonement in his power for having for an instant yielded to a doubt to her prejudice.

Surprise and joy at this unexpected anxiety about her—the proof it afforded of returning confidence, nearly overpowered Fidelia; with difficulty could she reply—with difficulty prevent a gush of tears from falling on the hand that enclasped hers.

Grandison would not release this directly; they were going to the upper rooms that evening, and he urged her to be of the party; but she shrunk from consenting—she was not in a state of mind to be able to participate in any amusement; besides, voluntarily she did not wish to put herself in the way of receiving his farther attentions. He would not easily be

refused, however; and they were arguing the point, as they had another that morning before, when the voice of Mrs. Stovendale was heard. Almost instantly after she joined them, and having affectionately embraced Fidelia, proceeded to express the surprise she felt at seeing her.

Greatly confused by the strong expression of this surprise, Fidelia could scarcely stammer out the pretext she had invented for coming there, and staying a day or two.

Grandison scarcely allowed her to explain, ere he mentioned the entreaties he had been using, begging Mrs. Stovendale to unite in them.

She hesitated.—"I don't know," she said; "if I really thought she would be gratified; but——" Then after a little further hesitation, with seeming carelessness, she added—"We met lord Castle Dermot to-day, and he teazed us to know who was to be our party to the rooms to-night."

"He would, of course, be there then. Oh! how unfortunate," thought Fidelia, "that this did not occur to me! what an opportunity should I then have had of speaking to him without stricture or remark!" But after so positively, so decidedly refusing to go, what excuse could she now make for changing her mind?

While musing on the subject, she was startled by catching the eyes of Grandison fastened on her. Deeply blushing at the kind of inquisitorial expression of his countenance at the moment, she said she would attend Mrs. Stovendale to her dressing-room, and accordingly retired with her.

Here Mrs. Stovendale again expressed her surprise at seeing her so immediately after their recent parting, but too plainly intimating by this that she did not altogether approve of her present visit. "Did not lady Oldbury appear a little hurt at her wish for it?" she anxiously demanded.

Fidelia replied in the negative, mentioning the indisposition of her lady-

ship as a sufficient reason why it should not. The mention of this led to inquiries so minute as to render Fidelia scarcely able to avoid betraying what she wished to conceal. But from a conversation so painful she was speedily relieved: the day was by this time far advanced, and to dress for dinner was soon therefore necessary; accordingly, in a little time she repaired to a chamber for the purpose.

But not immediately did she commence the business of the toilet. Dismissing the attendant, she began to ponder on what she had heard. The probable, the almost-certain opportunity she should have of speaking to lord Castle Dermot, without any painful observation, at the ball, dwelt on her imagination, and at length decided her on going there, spite of the remarks that might be made on her sudden change of mind; but painful as was the idea of these, it was as nothing compared to what she felt at the apprehension of her father returning to America without her.

Having made up her mind to this, she became a little more composed, and changing her dress, hastened to join Mrs. Stovendale in her chamber, feeling a shrinking dread, from a consciousness of being regarded as an intruder, if entering the drawing-room without her. Had she glided invisibly into it after her, she could not have been less noticed than she was on her entrance. The usual domestic party were by this time assembled in it, with the exception of Albina, Grandison, and Hastings, the latter of whom, in their way to it, his mother had informed her, was that day engaged, but expected back the next, to meet some military friends at Bristol, embarking thence for Ireland.

Seating herself at a window, Fidelia quickly seemed as little to notice as be noticed. At length she was roused from her melancholy abstraction by the entrance of Albina. Their eyes almost instantly met, but were almost as instantly withdrawn, not without a repetition of that

shock to Fidelia which her feelings now ever experienced when she beheld her. She could not for a moment pause on her conduct without being ready to burst into mingled tears and reproaches at it—without feeling a degree of wonder at it, that at times rendered her almost incredulous of the evidence of her senses.

But at length Grandison appeared, and having paid his compliments in a general way to the rest of the party, joined her: but not, as heretofore, did her countenance brighten at his approach, her cheek crimson with pleasure; the idea of their approaching separation—their final, lasting separation—precluded all but the experience of sorrow at his sight.

Her efforts to avoid his looks, lest he should read in her countenance what was passing in her heart, seemed so indicative of a wish to repel his attentions, as at length to pique him; and turning from her, he left her to the indulgence of the meditations he had sought to divert. She tried

to believe she was glad of this, since it prehaps saved the pain of telling him he must think no more of her; but in vain she tried; to think of having offended him—him to whose kindness and feeling she owed such obligations, filled her with sorrow.

Heretofore, if he had allowed one guest to engross his attention at the table where he presided as master, it was her; but now she sat there, no farther noticed by him than mere politeness demanded. She had then indeed offended him—indeed probably succeeded in her design of preventing any farther particularity from him. But was there no way of doing this but by hurting his feelings? involuntarily had she done so; but this was but little consolation for the anguish inflicted by the thought.

But she was forced to collect herself on leaving the dining-room, for the purpose of informing Mrs. Stovendale of her intention of accompanying her to the ball, and preparing for it.

Mrs. Stovendale heard what to her seemed her suddenly-changed determination, with a look of surprise that renewed all the painful confusion Fidelia had before experienced in the course of the day. Then, as if recollecting herself, she smiled, or rather affected to smile, at her not knowing her own mind before; and telling her she would send a servant to assist her in dressing, repaired to her own room.

Feeling as if she absolutely feared to encounter the eyes of Grandison, with timid looks Fidelia followed Mrs. Stovendale into the drawing-room, after joining her on being dressed. The gentlemen had by this time risen from table, and ere she had well entered, she saw Grandison start at the alteration in her dress. After a transient pause, as if he had forgotten his recent pique—"You have surprised me," he cried, in a low voice, following her to the distant chair she took. —"Pray, my dear madam," addressing himself to Mrs. Stovendale, "is it owing

to your persuasions that Miss Hawthorn has been induced to change what I thought her unalterable resolution of not going to the rooms this evening?"

"No, really," replied Mrs. Stovendale; "like you, I conceived it so unalterable, I tried none."

"Indeed!" and a momentary paleness was succeeded by a deep suffusion; then withdrawing his hand from the back of the chair on which it had been resting, he suddenly turned away.

Fidelia's heart sunk within her. The motive to which he had perhaps imputed her altered resolution filled her with anguish and dismay; yet scarcely could she wonder at, or condemn him for yielding to so injurious a thought, after the cruel insinuations he had heard that day from Dundonald.

But that he had conceived, or rather harboured one to her prejudice, she was led to disbelieve, when, as she was passing to the door, on chairs being announced,

he suddenly started up from a distant sofa on which he had thrown himself, and advancing towards her with something like his wonted smile, said he hoped she would not prevent his profiting by her altered determination, by promising to dance with him.

In joy at finding that she had then neither seriously offended him, nor yet been injured by any unpleasant surmise in his opinion; spite of her resolution to avoid all further attention from him, Fidelia would not have had fortitude to resist this request, but for the reflection, that if she allowed herself to be any way particularly engaged, she should probably lose the opportunity so eagerly desired, of speaking to lord Castle Dermot. Accordingly, influenced by this, in a tone of timidity, and with eyes cast down to avoid his, she told him it was not her intention to dance that evening.

Her hand, which he had taken to lead her to the chair, was instantly dropped,

and drawing back, he permitted her to go to it by herself.

The brilliantly-illuminated rooms, the gay and elegant assemblage that filled them, the grand *coup d'œil* formed by the whole, was all lost for a time upon Fidelia, so agonized was she by the recent circumstance. She saw, she felt indeed, she had now offended him, and her anguish at the thought was unutterable. Mechanically she moved along, unnoticing though not unnoticed, when her steps were suddenly arrested by the utterance of her name, and raising her eyes, she beheld Castle Dermot.

Yielding to the impulse of her feelings, she involuntarily extended her hand to him, and drawing back from the rest of the party—"Oh! how anxiously," she exclaimed, "have I been wishing to see you!"

A kind of half-uttered exclamation at the instant made her hastily turn round, and she beheld Grandison at her elbow.

The shock of that moment was indescribable. Oh! what might—what must be the inference from what he had overheard! How must it justify—how confirm the barbarous insinuations of Dundonald! Her very faculties seemed suspended, and worlds, had they been hers, she would have given not to have placed herself in such a predicament. But it was not to be retrieved. With a look of haughty, of contemptuous scorn, Grandison passed on, leaving her transfixed to the spot, till restored to recollection by the warm pressure of lord Castle Dermot's hand, and his impassioned whispers.

With resentful indignation she attempted to withdraw it, but in vain; whilst, in the usual strain, he proceeded to speak of his rapture at this unexpected meeting, and the soft confession that had escaped her.

"Confession!" repeated Fidelia; "oh yes! I know," she added, "what you allude to. I said I was anxious to see you, but on a very different account, I assure

you, to what you seem to insinuate," and she proceeded to explain the real one.

"Barbarous creature!" he exclaimed, in a tone of affected languishment, "to crush the delicious hopes you just raised; positively you are quite a tyrant; but," in a lowered tone, and with a look of meaning, "why so anxious to inquire about Glenmore?"

"Excuse me—suffice it, I wish to know whether he is still in your house, or, if not, where?"

"'Pon honour, can't say: if, however, you have any commands for him, and will entrust them to me, I will make a point of trying to discover, in order to transmit them; but how ill-natured to refuse me the smallest portion of your confidence!"

"Pray let there be an end of this trifling," said Fidelia, cruelly agitated by a fear of her father having already left the kingdom. "Oh! if you knew—" then checking herself, she proceeded to state her wish for the delivery of a letter to

Glenmore; and it was accordingly settled that the next day his lordship should call for it at lady De Bellemont's.—"Though, faith," added he, laughing, "my visits there are prohibited. To oblige you, however, I will summon sufficient of my Irish assurance to enable me to brave the frowns of the old dowager."

"Prohibited!" repeated Fidelia, and was proceeding to express her surprise at the circumstance, when suddenly recollecting some whispers concerning lady Caroline, she checked herself.

The fact was, suspicions at last began to be excited in the mind of lady De Bellemont, that made her not only quit Ireland abruptly, but interdict lord Castle Dermot from ever renewing any acquaintance with her or lady Caroline. Highly offended by her conduct, lady Caroline left her shortly after her return to England, but with a secret determination of making up the difference with her, should lord Castle Dermot, as he had promised,

pay a visit to Bath in the course of the season.

As soon as the dancing commenced, Fidelia hoped and concluded he would leave her; but on his asking her to join the set, and being positively refused, he expressed himself delighted at her refusal, as not dancing would, he added, allow them a better opportunity for conversing.

Highly incensed, Fidelia would have turned from him, but for the reflection, that if she offended him, she might deprive herself of all means of communicating with her father.

Miss Clinton and Albina had by this time joined the dancers, and Mrs. Stovendale, finding it was the determination of Fidelia not to follow their example, was on the point of proceeding to the card-room, to look about her, when she was prevented by lady O'Leary, who, followed by her daughters, at the instant joined her.—"Oh, my dear creature!" she cried, seizing her arm, and hurrying her to a

seat, " did you ever find any thing so stupid as the rooms to-night? Not a creature in them that's worth looking at."

" Nay," said Mrs. Stovendale, laughing, " I can't exactly agree with you."

" Well, I'm sure that's of very little consequence; excuse me, but I'm really quite peevish to-night. I wanted to sit down to cards, but 'tis quite impossible till the girls are taken out: 'pon my honour! I wish the master of the ceremonies would make new regulations, and allow none of those ridiculous loungers," glancing spitefully at lord Castle Dermot, " that one is now annoyed with in every ball-room and public place, to obtain admission; as my technical friend, colonel Gorget's lady says, if I were director here, I would allow none but effective men to enter."

"'Pon honour! I am inclined to believe," said lord Castle Dermot, purposely assuming one of his most affected tones, " that it is owing to the difficulty of selecting,

where such a constellation of beauty, as now almost everywhere bursts upon the enraptured gaze, is seen, that there are so many loiterers in general in a ball-room; admiring all so much, that they know not where to choose, they remain idle, so that, paradoxical as it may appear, were the belles less attractive, the beaux, I dare say, would be more gallant.

"Lord! how can you be so ridiculous, lord Castle Dermot? 'Pon honour! I never knew any thing like you—twisting and turning every thing in so ludicrous a light. According to your rule, I am sure there need be no great difficulty in choosing to-night, for there's a most agreeable variety of plain faces here this evening. But I never knew till now that colonel Grandison" (pointing him out at a little distance, looking on with an air of great indifference to what was going forward) "wished to set up for a fashionable indifferent."

"Nor do I believe he does," said Mrs.

Stovendale. "I dare say his not dancing is owing either to his being disappointed of the partner he likes, or waiting for one that he does; and see, to verify my assertion—" observing him at the instant leading out a very beautiful girl.

The pang which Fidelia experienced at the moment convinced her that she had derived pleasure from seeing him disengaged. To another, then, than the motive to which she could not help ascribing it, had the circumstance been perhaps owing. But to her, of what consequence was this? or rather should she not be pleased—should she not be gratified, that the pain she had anticipated to him from their approaching separation, might be less than she had previously imagined? In vain she tried to feel so; and after eagerly, anxiously watching him for some minutes, inquired of Mrs. Stovendale if she knew his partner? Mrs. Stovendale replying in the negative, she turned to lord Castle Dermot, to repeat the inquiry.

Applying his glass—"Oh yes! the lovely Miss D—— of Devon—charming creature, accomplished in the extreme, and universally admired. Grandison shewed his taste in waiting for her. I shouldn't wonder if she had caught him; and see, he positively seems to have no eyes but for her."

To the aching heart of Fidelia this seemed indeed but too evident, and with a sickening sensation she turned away her head. Her situation was now indeed distressing—unable to collect herself, and yet fearful of either giving offence to her tormenting companion, or else of confirming the suspicions she saw he entertained of the cause of her agitation, if she did not force herself to converse with him. But she was unexpectedly relieved from it. Lady O'Leary, at length seeing there was but little chance for her daughters that night, suddenly suggested the idea of one of them feigning indisposition, in order to have a pretext for retiring, and thus avoid the mortification of letting

it be seen that they were overlooked; and accordingly, on their rising to quit the room, Fidelia, pleading a violent headache, desired she might be allowed to retire with them.

What followed after her departure she neither knew nor cared; every thought and wish became absorbed and centered in trying to devise some plan for acquitting herself, in the opinion of Grandison, of deception and imprudence. Whether he had ever thought of her, as flattering circumstances once led her to imagine, or whether he was about making a transfer of his regard to another, still she felt it absolutely essential to her peace to vindicate herself in his eyes, and that to depart without conceiving she had done so, would be to aggravate every sorrow. His scornful, his deriding glance, at the moment of passing her in the rooms, left her no room to doubt of the impression made on him by the words he had overheard. In the explanation she meditated, was she not

consulting the relief of his feelings as well as her own? for that he did feel an interest—an interest of the liveliest nature for her—she could not bring herself to doubt; and where this is experienced, how exquisite is the pang that rends the heart at the belief of treachery or ingratitude! Yes—she would try to acquit herself of these in his sight—try to carry with her to the distant shores, from which her fainting heart turned with recoiling dread, the consolation of thinking his esteem was still hers.

She knew he was an early riser, and accordingly determined, though not without a dread of being accused of temerity for making the attempt, to endeavour to speak to him the next morning. Accordingly, early quitting her restless pillow, she hastily dressed herself, and with trembling steps descending to the breakfast-parlour, found him, as she had hoped, and rather expected would be the case, by himself there.

He was standing at the fire, thoughtfully leaning on the mantlepiece. At her entrance he started, but almost instantly recovering from his emotion, slightly bowed to her, and placing a chair for her near the fire, handed one of the newspapers to her with which the breakfast-table was strewed, and then taking another himself, resumed his leaning attitude.

This conduct, so plainly indicative of a wish to avoid all conversation with her, greatly disconcerted Fidelia; her courage almost forsook her; and but for the fear of not having another opportunity for the partial explanation so essential to her to give, she would have been utterly unequal to an exertion for the purpose.

Not without many timid and stolen glances did she at length make the requisite effort. Half-resting the paper on her lap, she falteringly begged to say a few words to him.

"To me, ma'am!" he said, in a tone of surprise, and raising his eyes from the pa-

per, with which he affected to have been engaged; "certainly—assuredly; I am all attention to any thing you wish to say."

"'Tis but very little," said Fidelia, deeply confused—"'tis merely to explain—to try to account for what I fear may have led to some misconception. The manner in which you heard me express myself last night to lord Castle Dermot must have appeared strange; but allow me to assure you——"

"Pardon me for interrupting you," he hastily exclaimed, and colouring violently; "but what is evidently so painful I must beg to decline listening to—'tis what I neither desire nor expect. Good God! what right have I, a stranger, comparatively speaking, to Miss Hawthorn, unallied, uncertain with her, to receive an explanation of her conduct; my wishes must ever be for her welfare; but still the vague interest of transient intimacy can neither give a right, or inspire a wish for particular confidence."

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Fidelia slightly bowed, as if acquiescing in this observation: at the moment she could no otherwise assent to it, so great was the shock her feelings had sustained by this cold, this contemptuous refutation of the flattering belief she had so lately entertained. In a minute or two, however, recovering herself in some degree—"I have to ask your forgiveness," she said, "for what, I am now sensible, was an unwarrantable obtrusion; 'tis so natural, however, to wish to prevent any unpleasant misconstruction, that I dare say I shall be excused for it. I might indeed," she added, her pale cheek flushed with the deep scarlet of offended pride and wounded delicacy, "have surmised that the concerns of a stranger could be of little consequence."

Then rising, she was about quitting the room, when Grandison, rushing between her and the door, opposed her retiring.—"No, no," he cried, no longer with the cold, the scornful indifference he had so

lately assumed; "what your motives are for dissembling your real sentiments with regard to lord Castle Dermot, I cannot fathom, nor do I now desire to know; suffice it that the nature of these sentiments has been too fully explained by circumstances to permit a possibility of my being longer deceived with regard to them. Good God! but a short time ago, and how incapable of deceit and dissimulation of any kind should I have deemed Miss Hawthorn! and yet still, if I can render her any service——"

"Service!" repeated Fidelia, involuntarily shrinking back; "oh, colonel Grandison! you little know the feelings you have so wounded, if you imagine I could accept a service where so injurious an opinion is entertained of me. No—my pride is not yet levelled to my destiny: but allow me to pass, sir."

"Oh! if I thought—if I could believe that I had indeed wronged you," he cried, in extreme agitation, and without seem-

ing to have heard what she had just requested; but what further he might have said was prevented at the moment by the approaching voices of the rest of the party; and ere he or Fidelia had well time to collect themselves, the countess entered, quickly followed by her other inmates.

Fidelia, as usual, was scarcely noticed by any of the party, except Mrs. Stovendale: this was now, however, from the concerns that occupied her mind, scarcely regarded by her. She could not help feeling embarrassed, however, by the manner in which she was stared at, evidently indicative of her being considered an intruder, when, after breakfast, she stationed herself in the drawing-room, there to await the expected visit of lord Castle Dermot, for whom she had, the night before, prepared the explanatory letter she meant to entrust to him.

Mrs. Stovendale not being there, she had no plausible pretext indeed for fixing herself there, but it was not to be avoided,

except she chose to lose the opportunity of seeing lord Castle Dermot. Several morning visitors dropped in, and at length Grandison made his appearance, but without noticing, or making an attempt to approach her, seated himself beside the countess at the upper end of the room, and began telling her some news he had heard in a stroll he had taken into the town.

While thus engaged, a servant entered and presented a letter to Fidelia. Much surprised, she examined the superscription, but without being able to discover from that who it came from: but though her curiosity was heightened by this circumstance, she decided, after a momentary hesitation, on deferring its perusal for a little, and was accordingly putting it in her pocket, when the servant, who had stopped, told her in a low voice it required an immediate answer, and then retired.

Differently circumstanced, she would have repaired to her chamber to peruse it, but she now feared quitting her present

her cheek, at once convinced him he had not sued in vain.

Almost instantly he retired from the room, and in a few minutes after, Fidelia tremblingly took advantage of the entrance of some new visitors to follow, unwilling to seem to trifle with his feelings by keeping him long waiting for her, and believing she might safely venture to quit the drawing-room for a few minutes, lord Castle Dermot having mentioned a later hour for coming.

Just as she had descended the stairs, a loud knock was heard, and the next instant lord Castle Dermot was admitted.

Involuntarily Fidelia shrunk back, as if she had meant to fly him; then recollecting herself, the impolicy of offending him, and the probability there was, if she did not avail herself of the present opportunity for giving him her letter, another might not occur, she turned into an adjoining parlour, with a hope of being shortly able to disengage herself from him,

and of their conference remaining unknown to Grandison.

"Well, my lovely girl," he cried, closing the door as he followed into the parlour, "I am come perhaps sooner than you expected; but to bridle any longer my impatience to behold you was impossible."

"Come, come, my lord," said Fidelia, impatiently, "this is no time for trifling; I am in a hurry to leave this, and must therefore beseech you to take my letter, and no longer detain me."

"And why in a hurry to leave this? You can't suppose, I hope, that I will let you escape me again: but don't frown so angrily. Upon my soul, there can't be a more contrite wretch on earth than I am, for any offence I may have given you; as a proof of which, I only wanted to discover you to throw myself and fortune at your feet."

"Oh, my lord! again I say this is no time for trifling."

"Trifling! why, it's you, you provoking creature, that are trifling. Upon my honour—upon my soul, I am serious!" and he made an effort to throw himself at her feet.

Starting back—"For Heaven's sake desist, my lord!" she cried; "I cannot stay another minute here. Tell me therefore at once whether or not you'll take my letter?"

Instead of answering, lord Castle Dermot eagerly caught the hand which she was extending to him with it, and rapturously raised it to his lips. At this instant the door opened and Grandison entered, or rather was entering, for at the sight that met his view, he started back with every demonstration of confusion and astonishment.

What the confusion, the dismay of Fidelia was, may easier be conceived than described. She tried to speak; but utterance was denied her, and ere she regained it, he was gone.

Mistaking her fixed look of agony for

one of indignation at his conduct, lord Castle Dermot now endeavoured to appease it, by taking her letter, and promising to pay all due attention to its delivery. She seemed to hear him not, however—to be lost at the moment to all external consciousness, till, on his again attempting to take her hand, when bursting from him, she escaped from the room, and had just regained the stairs, when she encountered Hastings.—" Well met," he exclaimed, as he affectionately kissed her hand; " had we not thus encountered, I should have been this day to pay a visit at lady Oldbury's, for I want much to have some conversation with you." Then, as if apprehensive of being interrupted, he led her into an adjoining room, where, closing the door—" To express the esteem and friendship I experience for you," he said, " I hope is unnecessary. Ere I knew you, I felt a powerful interest for you, which a farther knowledge did not tend to lessen; feeling therefore as I do, a fraternal re-

gard and affection for you, you may conceive the pain it has given me to think that a coolness exists between you and Albina. For some time I suspected it; but recent circumstances—the arrangements made for the approaching event, have occasioned me to more than do so, and but for the manner in which I have lately been engaged with other friends, I should before have spoken to you on the subject, for I cannot bear that the happiness I looked forward to, from having you as a beloved sister domesticated with us, should not be enjoyed. Tell me, therefore, to what is owing what has so distressed me: between the nearest connexions, the dearest friends, I know little misunderstandings will sometimes arise, that a slight explanation is often only requisite to settle. But why should I question you on the matter, you may ask, instead of the other party? This is not the case. I have questioned Albina on the subject, but without being able to obtain an answer from her; with you,

therefore, it rests to satisfy my anxiety on the subject, and enable me to reconcile, I hope, two tenderly-attached friends to each other."

"Oh no, not with me!" in agony of soul cried Fidelia, and with a gush of tears, "not with me does it rest to do so. Heaven is my witness!" raising her streaming eyes with an appealing look, "that I know not how I have lost the regard of Albina, yet that I have lost it, is but too surely the case. The delighted welcome, the affectionate embrace I looked for here awaited me not. The playmate of my infancy, friend of my youth, has abandoned me: we that literally took sweet counsel together, and almost grew up hand-in-hand, are now estranged, disunited from each other."

"Good God! 'tis strange—'tis incomprehensible!" said Hastings, traversing the room in extreme agitation; "but trust me," he added, again taking the hand of

Fidelia, " I will not rest till I have it accounted for."

He then proceeded to express his hope that she would continue a little longer where she was; but she informed him it was her intention to return immediately to lady Oldbury's, and which she was now about apprising Mrs. Stovendale of. The purpose for which she had come to Bath accomplished, there was nothing indeed to detain her there: from all she had suffered in it, she was longing to get back to where quietness at least would be her portion.

The warm-hearted and generous Hastings going directly in quest of Albina, found her on the point of setting out for the pump-room, with Miss Clinton and Dundonald, in compliance with the wishes of the former.

Expressing his wish for a little previous conversation, he briefly recapitulated what had just occurred between Fidelia and him, concluding by an earnest hope that Albi-

na would not, by any longer persevering in a pique for which there was no justification, entail unhappiness upon herself and her friend.—"Think," he added, tenderly taking her hand, and in a tone of fond remembrance, "how your coolness must pain her—think of the light too in which it may be regarded by those who know the proofs of affection she has given you; the world, as well as I, may blame you for it, though she alone doth feel the injury."

Confused beyond description, Albina had scarcely power to stammer out she bore her no pique.

"No pique!" in extreme surprise, "and yet act to her as you have recently done? To what then—to what cruel misrepresentation—to what undue influence," and involuntarily he glanced at Dundonald, "is your conduct owing?"

"You pay your mistress then the compliment of thinking," retorted Dundonald, perfectly comprehending his glance, and

swelling with rage and malice, "that she cannot act without influence."

"Yes, I pay her the compliment," was the haughty return, "of thinking that her own heart is too kind, too gentle, to allow her voluntarily to act with unkindness to any one."

"Oh, do not distress me by this angry argument," in extreme alarm implored Albina.

She knew they were not friends, and she trembled from this circumstance at the idea of the slightest difference between them, lest of its creating such a misunderstanding as from their want of mutual regard might never be settled.

The cruel and unmanly persecution of his sister on his account Hastings might have forgiven, but that the subsequent conduct of Dundonald forced him to remember it. The fact was, Dundonald no sooner found himself relieved from the fears he had entertained on account of colonel Grandison, than all his previous am-

bition revived, and with deep regret and vexation he thought of the wished-for union between his sister and the marquis of Inverary being broken off, more especially as the circumstance seemed to give high displeasure to Miss Clinton. What seemed inevitable, however, he tried to bring himself to endure, but not without being occasionally betrayed into an expression of the feelings he experienced.

Giving full utterance now to these, he at length provoked Hastings to a degree that led him to utter something like an indirect wish for a cessation of all further intercourse between them.

"Nothing can be easier," cried Fergus, with malicious exultation. "Your yielding to the warm interest so suddenly inspired for the adopted heiress of lady Oldbury, will readily occasion what, with regard to your present mistress, you have so gallantly desired."

"I desire nothing that ought to hurt or offend her," said the greatly-agitated Hastings. "I merely desire her to do justice

to her own generous feelings, by shaking off the undue influence it is now too obvious has been exercised over them."

"Oh no, no!" exclaimed Albina, terrified at the thought of what might result from this belief; "that is, I mean, apply, appeal to Fidelia herself, question her whether she can acquit herself of ever having done ought to occasion the estrangement of her friends."

"I have already done so," said Hastings, warmly; "and I grieve at the reflection of having offered her such an indignity; I should have been convinced that she was incapable of any thing of the kind."

"Then it is plain, it is obvious you condemn me on her account," returned Albina."

She paused, unable for a moment to proceed, from the agonizing sensation, the recoiling pang of the moment. Spite of herself, she could not help believing that an alliance with Fidelia would be infinitely more pleasing to Mrs. Stovendale than

with her, and this belief preparing her to be easily alarmed—" Allow me," she added, " to observe, that your opinion of me must then change, ere we again think seriously of each other. If without cause I am accused of treating a person I professed a friendship for with coldness and neglect, I must be considered capricious and insincere, and consequently unworthy of that esteem and confidence which I am determined never to marry without the conviction of possessing."

Confounded by this assertion, Hastings for a moment had not the power of replying; but when he saw her about leaving the room, he recovered himself, and in equal alarm and agitation, strove to prevent her; the secretly-delighted Fergus, however, rendered his efforts to do so ineffectual. Good God! had he then seriously offended her? But no, it could not be: a suppliant, a deprecating letter would remove her displeasure for any thing that in the inadvertence of passion had escaped

him, and hastening away without deigning to hold any farther converse with Fergus, as the latter had hoped, for the purpose of still further trying to exasperate him, he directly proceeded to address one to her; but ere it was finished she was gone.

Fergus, with a hasty apology to the countess for the measure, had hurried her away, leaving their address only with Miss Clinton, and perfectly careless of the comments that might be provoked by the circumstance.

Hastings was nearly distracted when he heard of her removal, without any one at hand to counteract the insidious influence of Fergus; he trembled to think of the consequences that might result from it. He knew him his bitter enemy, hostile both from pride and ambition to his hopes and wishes, and he sickened to think of the effect his studied misrepresentations and insinuations might have upon her. Oh, on the very brink of happiness, should he be plunged into despair, as his lips al-

most touched the blissful cup! Should it malignantly be dashed from him? Why had he suffered himself to be betrayed into such warmth? and yet how was it avoidable, in pleading the cause of an injured being? But was she really injured? The manner in which Albina had urged him to appeal to her for a confirmation of the fact now recurred to his recollection, and he accordingly decided on doing so, in still more energetic terms than he had already done.

Hastening to seek her for the purpose, he found his mother with her: his extreme agitation could not be concealed, and indescribable was the distress of Fidelia on learning the cause of it. But in vain he questioned and re-questioned her concerning her correspondence with Albina, whether in any instance she could recal to her recollection having afforded cause for pique or coldness. She still persisted in acquitting herself; and in his turn Hastings now began to think he had been

ill-treated, and fear Albina was desirous of a pretext for breaking with him.

Fidelia's distress at what had occurred was aggravated by the manner in which Mrs. Stovendale now expressed herself concerning her recent visit to Bath.—"But for it," she said, "what has now occurred would not have taken place, and as far as I can judge, there was no sufficient reason for it."

To be blamed—to be censured—to be accused of creating unhappiness where she would have resigned so much to occasion the reverse—oh! how bitter were the feelings of Fidelia at this moment! In agony she wrung her hands. Unfortunate in every way, was not the pressure of her own misery sufficient, but that it must be heightened by the thought of having caused unhappiness to others?—"Oh, let me fly," was almost her exclamation, "let me fly from the scene of confusion and discord I have created, to where the friends I love and venerate can never more be grieved

or disturbed by the sight of so forlorn a wretch!"

But her tears, her anguish did not meet with that sympathy in the present instance from her companions they were wont to do. Hastings was lost in meditation on the conduct of Albina, and Mrs. Stovendale could not overcome the displeasure she felt at her, to her, apparently unnecessary visit to Bath, productive as it had been of such unpleasant consequences.

With the former undried on her pale cheek, the latter unsoothed, unmitigated, she was suffered to depart by herself, Mrs. Stovendale foregoing her previous intention of accompanying her back to lady Oldbury's, in hopes her continuing on the spot might enable her to do something immediately for adjusting the difference between Hastings and Albina.

But her inability to procure her address from Miss Clinton defeated these hopes. Her distress at the sight of what Hastings continued to endure was, of course, great, but still not sufficient to make her retain

the resentment she had experienced against Fidelia: innocently she believed her the cause of their present uneasiness, and, of course, that it was both unjust and illiberal to be displeased with her on that account. Regretting the indications of anger that had escaped her, she was thinking of writing an extenuating letter to her, when colonel Grandison desired to speak with her.

In deep resentment at the scene he had witnessed between Fidelia and lord Castle Dermot, he had fled the house, with a determination never again to seek an opportunity of conversing with her. But transient are the resolves of a heart attached as his: as passion subsided, he reflected how often appearances misled; how coldly, how calmly both justice and candour required that circumstances should be weighed and investigated, ere a final opinion was formed. Would he allow himself to question Fidelia relative to what had lately occurred? How entirely perhaps might she be able to acquit herself in

his eyes of all that appeared censurable, cruel to his feelings, and unworthy of her own. But was it not the weakness, the infatuation of love that was now suggesting this measure? But no—or even if it were, he felt that he could know no rest or peace, except one way or other he were enabled to come to a decided opinion—that to be resolved, and he should be enabled at once to away with love or jealousy.

But how could he desire this explanation without coming to an explicit one respecting his own sentiments? Except such were his determination, what right could he have to attempt the investigation of hers—to inquire into the motives of her conduct? There was no longer any reason for not avowing these. In the belief that had first awakened his interest for her he was confirmed, and all that remained was to ascertain whether she was indeed worthy of her origin, and at liberty to return his affection.

He quickly heard of her departure to lady Oldbury's, and at first decided on following thither himself; but upon mature consideration, conceived it would probably save much painful embarrassment and confusion to both, allowing Mrs. Stovendale to explain his sentiments and inquire into hers, and accordingly sought her for the purpose of requesting this.

Gladly did she undertake this office, so deeply was she interested in the happiness of both, and so convinced was she, from many circumstances, that their union would be a means of confirming this.

She lost no time in setting out on her embassy, but persuaded that the result of her conference with Fidelia would be what she wished, she deemed it but right, ere she explained to her the wishes of Grandison, to make known his proposal to lady Oldbury, for the purpose of exactly ascertaining what the present intentions of that lady were with respect to her.

Till she had an interview with her lady-

ship, she accordingly desired Fidelia not to be informed of her arrival.

Lady Oldbury received her in her dressing-room, to which she was still confined through the languor occasioned by recent agitation. Mrs. Stovendale soon explained her business, and with heartfelt joy her ladyship listened to her, feeling as she did, that by the happy establishment of Fidelia, she should be relieved from the horrible apprehension that had long tormented her, of having entailed, through her cruelty, unhappiness upon her as well as her parents. She avowed her intention of immediately giving her a fortune, such as colonel Grandison had a right to expect, and of ultimately making her her heiress. But why she did so—the real motive for thus adopting her, it was finally decided between her and Mrs. Stovendale should be concealed from her. To avow her birth could not fail of leading to disclosures that must not only pain at the moment, but leave an impression that

might empoison all her future felicity. That she was rather aware of their being acquainted with her family story, was evident to both; but this could not induce either to be explicit with her on the subject of it, convinced no surmise she could form as to the cause of their silence respecting it could be half so distressing as what they had to disclose.

From a melancholy stroll by herself, Fidelia was at length summoned to meet Mrs. Stovendale alone. Her first glance let her perceive that she no longer retained any resentment against her, and tears of joy gushed from her at the conviction.

As soon as she saw her a little composed, Mrs. Stovendale proceeded to acquaint her with the purport of her visit. As she gradually revealed it, the recently-recovered composure of Fidelia vanished, and all again was distress and perturbation in her bosom. From conflicts such as the present, she trusted she should have been spared—from being absolutely compelled

to unequivocally reject, refuse the lover of her heart, the generous, the disinterested being, who had so early, so uniformly, distinguished her by attentions calculated to flatter the most exalted of her sex, and thus perhaps incurring the imputation of insensibility.

To have explained her motives for this, would have been to alleviate the anguish occasioned by the circumstance; but this she could not, did not, dare to do; still she shrunk from confiding the secret that weighed upon her heart, from a dread that the pity with which her father was now thought of, might be converted into horror, if it were known he was still in existence.

While vainly struggling with her feelings, and endeavouring to think how she should excuse her acceptance of the present proposal, without subjecting herself to suspicions she shrunk from, Mrs. Stovendale sat attentively observing her; and at length finding she still continued silent,

suddenly observed, she feared the apprehensions of Grandison were but too well founded.

Fidelia, starting, inquired what these were?

"That your affections are lord Castle Dermot's," she replied, "and I said I feared this, because convinced from many circumstances that the happiness you might otherwise enjoy, you have but little chance of."

"Does it always follow," asked Fidelia, with a languid smile, "that to hesitate on such a subject as the present, there must be an attachment elsewhere?"

"No; but then it is rather a natural supposition that a man like colonel Grandison could not be refused, without a previous predilection for another. Be candid, I implore you; to trifle with colonel Grandison would be injurious to yourself, as well as cruel and ungenerous to him."

"Then, believe me," said Fidelia, "that a favourable sentiment for lord Castle Der-

mot, I neither do, nor ever did feel, and that to whatever cause may be owing my present rejection of the generous proposal of colonel Grandison, it will not be to any predilection for another."

"Good God, you amaze me!" said Mrs. Stovendale. "You deny a partiality for another, and yet intimate a determination to reject the addresses of Grandison."

"Such is my cruel fate!" cried Fidelia, bursting into tears. "No one can feel more sensibly the high honour done them by colonel Grandison than I do, yet I cannot give him that proof of strong affection that he requires. But, oh! dearest madam!" with streaming eyes and clasped hands, she added, seeing Mrs. Stovendale about to interrupt her, "do not, I implore you, importune me farther on the subject."

"Impossible!" returned Mrs. Stovendale; "I see you are not explicit; I see there is some secret struggling in your bosom you fear to disclose: mystery always excites suspicion; for your own sake be candid,

and acknowledge the reason for what appears so strange. I do confess I did imagine colonel Grandison had excited no little interest in your heart; but I may have been mistaken, and if so, do not fear to say it; he may, he must, be pained by the confession, but not offended, for our affections are not always under our direction."

"Oh! if it was only a want of due, of fervent affection for him, that now prevented my acceptance of his offer, how soon would I be his!" now burst involuntarily from the trembling lips of Fidelia. "But the fact is," she added, deeply blushing, at having thus rendered her rejection of him still stranger by this confession, "I have been so bewildered, so perplexed, by recent occurrences, that, with a mind agitated, disturbed, like mine, I cannot, must not, think of entering upon new duties. As well might you desire a person just saved from the fury of a tempestuous ocean, on which they had been long tossed without hope of succour, to immediately

form a plan for their establishment in life, as for me, perturbed as I still am from recent events, to pay any serious attention to a proposal like colonel Grandison's."

"And is it to this alone," demanded Mrs. Stovendale, steadily looking at her, "that your present rejection of him is owing?—Is it entirely to your inability at present to think collectedly on any subject?"

"Spare me any farther interrogations at present, dear madam," said Fidelia evasively. "In the course of a month colonel Grandison shall hear from me, and I will then be as candid and ingenuous with him as he can desire; but till then I cannot, must not, see or hear from him, for solitude and silence are both requisite to enable me to recover myself."

It might be as she stated, that she required time to recover herself, after all the recent shocks she had experienced, ere she could attend to any thing of serious import; but still Mrs. Stovendale was not

satisfied—still a doubt lurked in her mind that she had not been ingenuous with her, and, in consequence, she continued to press upon her mind the necessity of being so, and the removal of all seeming impediments to her union with colonel Grandison, by the kindness of lady Oldbury.

Fair and flattering was the picture she drew of the happiness that might be hers; but from the contemplation of it Fidelia shrunk in agony, persuaded such would never be possessed by her; and at length, with fresh gushing tears, she besought Mrs. Stovendale to desist from any farther representations on the subject.

"Well, you shall be obeyed," said Mrs. Stovendale, at length rising to depart; "for the time you wish you shall be left to yourself. Explicitly I shall detail to colonel Grandison all that has occurred in this interview, and thus, at least, satisfy him that he has no rival."

"Satisfy him," cried Fidelia, warmly, "that I dwell with all the sensibility he

can desire upon his generous attachment; and that when he hears from me, every thought of my heart, every incident of my life, all I know, all I think, shall be made known; but, till then, let me, I implore, remain undisturbed."

Again promising compliance with this request, Mrs. Stovendale at last, with an affectionate embrace, took leave.

Scarcely was she gone, ere, fearful of being summoned to lady Oldbury, and in her present state of mind being unable to bear the idea of any restraint, Fidelia quitted the house, and unconsciously entered a darkly-shaded walk, that led towards the road. Scarcely had she got within sight of this, when she heard the carriage of Mrs. Stovendale approaching, and the next instant beheld, in an opposite direction, colonel Grandison approaching on horseback to meet it.

Oh! how did this proof of eager impatience to learn the result of this visit agonize her!—how almost did she wish, from

the pain he was destined to feel on her account, that she had never awakened any interest in his bosom!

Concealed by the thickly-intervening trees, she continued to observe him. He spurred his horse at sight of the carriage, and, after speaking for a few minutes to Mrs. Stovendale, with his hand resting on the door, on its stopping at his near approach, he dismounted and entered it.

Fidelia continued to strain her sight after it, till it could no longer be either seen or heard. She had seen him, perhaps for the last time, and tears gushed anew at the idea. Even then, perhaps, from the communication of Mrs. Stovendale, anger and disdain might be kindling in his bosom against her, and, either distrusting the sincerity of her declarations, or conceiving she had trifled with him, he might object to receiving the promised letter; but she would send it, nevertheless, even though an intimation of this kind should be received. Nothing could quiet her mind—

nothing could console her for the felicity she resigned, but the idea of fully exculpating herself in his opinion—of ensuring to herself a continuance of the esteem that had led to a wish for their union. If, before the expiration of a month, she heard nothing of her father, it was her resolve to repose implicit confidence in Grandison; and in making him acquainted with the sufferings she was enduring, implore his advice and assistance: counselled by him, she could not do wrong—soothed, consoled by him, and her misery must be alleviated. Oh! how sweet to her tortured feelings would be his sympathy!—how calming to her harassed spirits the idea of having such a friend!—of proving to him that she never was unworthy of the fond affection he had lavished on her!

From the consolation she anticipated from writing this letter, she almost wished she might have a pretext for doing so. In less than two days after, however, she received a billet from lord Castle Dermot,

informing her that her letter had been, through his indefatigable exertion, received by the person to whom it was addressed, and that, in consequence, he had himself received one from him, desiring that he might convey her immediately to him. This appeared so probable to Fidelia, that she could not entertain a doubt on the subject, and she accordingly made preparations for her secret departure. Every thing was arranged by his lordship; and, at an appointed time, she met him at a little distance from the house, and set off with him in the chaise that waited for her.

CHAPTER IV.

And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack! alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.

.....

For now I stand as one upon a rock,
Environ'd with a wilderness of sea,
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,
Expecting ever when some envious surge
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.

SHAKESPEARE.

BELIEVING that a few days more would now waft her from the shores of England, Fidelia could not, for some time, control the agonizing feelings that rent her soul after quitting lady Oldbury's. No more to behold the friends she loved—to enjoy the society she delighted in, was a thought fraught with anguish; still, however, she

persevered in her resolution of accompanying her father to the scene of his exile, and strove to derive some consolation from the hope, that the explanatory letter she had meditated to Grandison would be permitted by him, persuaded it could not be received without his esteem, his friendship being for ever ensured to her.

The conduct of her companion was too guarded to permit her to entertain a suspicion of his truth, though, in fact, he had completely deceived her. The letter entrusted to his care he had no scruple in opening, and its perusal suggested to him the deception he now practised; but with no dishonourable view did he inveigle her from the protection she was under. The relationship he had discovered existing between them precluded all further thoughts of an unworthy nature, and seriously he resolved on carrying her off to Scotland to make her his wife, feeling that if he could be attached to any one for a time, it was to her, and anxious besides for a pretext of

breaking with lady Caroline, of dangling after whom he was by this time completely weary; but his scheme, though, as he conceived, admirably planned, was most unexpectedly frustrated.

They had nearly crossed the country, and were on the high road to the land of matrimony, when, stopping at an obscure inn for a little rest and refreshment, Glenmore suddenly appeared before them. What immediately followed we shall pass over—his surprise, his emotion, on learning the discovery his daughter had made, and the purpose for which she was then travelling. Suffice it, that each understood, if they had not then met, they might have met no more, as he was then preparing to return to his exile, and had feared to make any farther attempt to see her.

At the intention she avowed of embarking with him for America, lord Castle Dermot was in absolute despair; but in vain he pleaded his cause. If she had brought herself to resolve, as she had done, on reject-

ing the hand of the man she loved, in order to be at liberty to devote herself to her father, what chance was there of a person she was indifferent to succeeding with her? Here indeed she had no painful struggle to sustain—here no merit to ascribe to herself.

Unknowing her sentiments, however, Glenmore, with the disinterestedness of real affection and generosity, desired her to pause ere she fully decided on the step she meditated. To do so, she declared, would be unnecessary, having already determined on it; and, kneeling at his feet, she solemnly protested that no circumstance she had the power of commanding should again separate them.

The violence to which the disappointment of lord Castle Dermot gave rise alarmed Glenmore, and, united to his evident want of due reflection, determined him on withdrawing his further confidence from him. On his daughter's account he trembled at the idea of any fatal discovery

taking place—on her account shuddered at the idea of what he might otherwise have braved. Accordingly, when, the ensuing morning, at an early hour, lord Castle Dermot rose for the purpose of renewing the arguments and entreaties of the preceding day, he found his companions gone; nor though he lost not a moment in setting out in pursuit of them, could he obtain any trace of them; but the fact was, it was not in the direction he imagined they were gone, namely, towards Liverpool, concluding that this would be the road he would unhesitatingly take, from knowing it was thence they would embark for America. Turning in a contrary direction, Glenmore decided on advancing a little farther into Cumberland, and pausing there, till it might be supposed his lordship had relinquished all hope of being able to intercept their departure. After journeying some little time through by-roads, they succeeded in obtaining shelter in an obscure place, where, as the agitation of alarm sub-

sided, Fidelia became acquainted with all the particulars she wished to know.

Till out of the kingdom, the knowledge of her surviving her unhappy mother was concealed from him, lest otherwise it, on her account, by insisting on taking her with him, might endanger his safety. When no farther apprehensions of this nature could be entertained, he was then informed of it, in hopes the information might be a stimulus to exertion. This it certainly was; but so little chance, notwithstanding, appeared to Caty of his being able to provide for her in the manner she wished, that, when a few years after she found it advisable to follow her husband to America, where he had joined Glenmore, she decided on practising the deception, already related, on Dundonald, conceiving, by a casuistry of her own, that in trying to profit by what others seemed determined on rejecting, she did no harm or injury to any one; but rather fearful of Glenmore's code of morality differing a

little from hers, she decided, for the present at least, on imposing a belief of Fidelia's death on him, the account of which was the afflicting information alluded to by Glenmore in his previous recital to his daughter, as completely desolating his feelings. But notwithstanding what she saw him suffer from the assertion, Caty persisted in it, till a dangerous fit of illness awoke compunctious feelings, that impelled her to the disclosure of the truth.

Glenmore no sooner learned this, than he resolved on repairing to Ireland, preferring any risk to allowing his child to continue the usurper of another's rights; besides, his impatience to behold her was not to be controlled—his anxiety to be satisfied of her safety, and assured that she needed not the acknowledgment of a parent's claim.

Previous to his departure from America, Conolly, Caty's son, had also left it, for the double purpose of trying to obtain some situation in their native country,

that might enable his parents to return to it, and of transmitting to his mother some account of her nursling. The first he found an easy matter, being immediately, on his application for the purpose, taken into the service of colonel Grandison; but the latter he did not so readily accomplish; and aware what the distraction of his mother would be, should she hear of the failure of her plan with regard to Fidelia, without learning what had afterwards become of her, he decided on remaining silent on the subject, till, by indefatigable exertions, he succeeded in discovering her under the protection of the Bryerlys—a circumstance he had no sooner ascertained, than he contrived, although with insuperable reluctance, to get himself dismissed by colonel Grandison, in order that he might endeavour to get himself into the service of Mr. Bryerly, in order better to be satisfied of her exact situation, in which project he, happily for Fidelia, from what afterwards occurred, succeeded.

On being dismissed by the Bryerlys, or rather dismissing himself from their service on her account, he got reinstated in colonel Grandison's, and accompanying him to Dundonald's, was there joined by Glenmore, who took upon himself to discover to her the imposition she was innocently concerned in.

Here an explanation ensued, that wrung the heart of Glenmore for his daughter. Few as her years had been, what vicissitudes had she experienced!—child of sorrow and misfortune, to what early trials had she been exposed!—on what a tempestuous sea, tossed and driven, ere well endued with strength to struggle with adversity! but "Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb:" the mountain flower glints forth uninjured amidst the rigours of winter, while the cultured flower, watched over with care and solicitude, often fades immaturely. How great was his gratitude, his pride, to think

that the storm that had beat so keen and heavy on her tender years, had neither crushed her to the earth, nor yet sullied or defaced her native purity—that her mind was the seat of gentleness and truth —her person loveliness itself! but the raptures, the transports, of the father's heart, were checked by his being withheld from giving utterance to either—various motives interdicted the disclosure of their affinity.

The interest he naturally conceived her youth, her beauty, and her innocence, must have excited, would, he permitted himself not to doubt, ensure to her the protection and kindness of those she was amongst, even after the discovery of her not being the daughter of Dundonald, and he would not, he could not, be so cruel, so selfish, as to tear her away from all the early and entwining attachments of her youthful heart, so cruel as to hide her blooming head in the melancholy wilds that had so long

enshrouded him in their gloom, or expose her to the dreadful chance of being left an unconnected stranger in a foreign land.

How the intimation of the deception practised by her nurse respecting her was given, has been already related. The result of it, or rather the belief he was led into of its occasioning her expulsion from the residence of lady Castle Dermot, filled him with anguish and dismay. In the grief and indignation of his soul, at cruelty so unmerited, with difficulty could he prevent himself from rushing into the presence of her ladyship, to declare their affinity; nothing but a mistake he had been led into, with regard to her real feelings and disposition, prevented him—a mistake that induced him to think that the disclosure of her existence to her would be attended with danger, and on Fidelia's account he was now more solicitous than before to guard against any thing of the kind; besides, a faint hope had again begun to dawn on his heart, that stimulated him to

avoid every thing like rashness.—But to explain the mistake above alluded to, and why on the discovery of his daughter's existence, he had not at once resigned her to the protection of her aunt —immediately after her marriage, lady Castle Dermot went abroad with her lord; his mother, an artful and avaricious woman, remained behind at the family-seat. Her pleasure at the renunciation of the ill-fated Julia by her father was inexpressible, from the hope it inspired, of all the possessions of lord Mountrath centering in her son; so far, therefore, from feeling the slightest pity or compassion for the wretched pair, when Glenmore, in the agony of his heart, entreated the address of his sister-in-law, in order to apply to her on behalf of the unfortunate Julia, she sternly refused it, and followed up the cruelty of this conduct, by pretending, in the course of a few weeks after, to have received a letter from her, stating, that in obedience to the commands of her justly-

incensed parent, she was determined to hold no farther communication with either, thus destroying the hope that both had fondly clung to, as a resource against despair, of yet finding in her kindness, relief and consolation, if finally disappointed of the parental forgiveness they solicited; for that any one could have the barbarity to invent such a falsehood, to beings situate as they were, they could not possibly suspect.—But to remain in uncertainty with regard to Fidelia was not to be endured, and accordingly, accompanied by Conolly, who, to be able to attach himself entirely to him, again left colonel Grandison, the wretched father set out in quest of her. With difficulty he succeeded in tracing her to the house to which she had been inveigled by lord Castle Dermot; but here all farther clue was lost, and Glenmore was, in consequence, in a state of absolute distraction. How to act, poor Conolly was utterly unable to suggest, when he unexpectedly learned the Beau-

monts were near Dublin; and trusting to be able to obtain some information from them concerning her, set out for their abode, and thus encountered the identical object he was in pursuit of, the day he went to inquire after her, being the one in which she herself had also gone to Raheny.

Restored to comparative tranquillity by the knowledge of her safety, Glenmore immediately began to consider what was to be done. He was not long in deciding; Conolly, though a domestic of the marquis of Clonard's, had heard of the arrival of the Stovendales in Ireland, and in acquainting Glenmore with this circumstance, he also made known to him what he had previously been kept in ignorance of, namely, the strong anxiety Mrs. Stovendale had early manifested about his child, and the deception also practised on her by his mother, by assuring her of its death, in order to prevent her making any effort to wrest it from her. But why, it

may here be demanded, have felt unwilling to resign the desolate babe to protection so kind and eligible? Mrs. Stovendale was the daughter of the person whose introduction to the Winterfields had occasioned such an alteration in their sentiments and intentions with regard to Glenmore; and such was the hatred and prejudice excited in the mind of Caty, both against him and all immediately connected with him, from the circumstance, for she was too violent in her resentments not to confound the innocent with the guilty, that she would probably have rather entrusted the infant to the care of an absolute savage than to her.

But in distrusting the motive that induced Mrs. Stovendale to wish to have it resigned to her, she did her the greatest injustice. The early particulars she learnt of Glenmore had excited the most powerful interest in her feelings for him, which, added to the injury she was aware he had sustained through the arts of her father,

rendered her unceasing in her wishes to serve him, but to manifest which she had not the power, till too late, to do so effectually.

The tacit reproach her anxiety about him was to the Winterfields, offended them highly; and through this and the artful manœuvring of her father, who, in introducing her to their notice, had done so merely for the purpose of establishing himself still more firmly in their regard, and which, conceiving he had now done, he rather strove to lessen than advance her in their good opinion, she gradually became a mere neglected dependant, instead of an idolized favourite, till at length, wearied and disgusted by the ill-treatment she received, she accepted the invitation of lady Eva Grandison to reside with her, and thus became known to her future husband. Still retaining her anxious solicitude about Glenmore, she no sooner heard his sad story, than she hastened to Ireland, for the express purpose of taking his in-

fant under her protection, but in which benevolent intention she was disappointed by the deception practised by Caty.

As already stated, Glenmore, on being satisfied, through Conolly, of the safety of his daughter, began to consider what was to be done, and speedily came to a decision. The particulars above narrated made him hope that it would be an easy matter to revive in the mind of Mrs. Stovendale the interest she had once expressed for Fidelia; and accordingly Conolly was dispatched to introduce himself to her, for the purpose of explaining the imposition of his mother.

The result justified the confidence placed in her humanity. Scarcely was she assured of the existence of Fidelia, ere she became all anxiety to have her under her fostering protection; but in disclosing her existence, Glenmore's, by his express desire, was carefully concealed from her; and she was also conjured by Conolly not to reveal to her the particulars of her birth,

that her mind might not be needlessly pained by knowing the misfortunes of her family.

For not placing implicit confidence in Mrs. Stovendale, with regard to himself, Glenmore was actuated by a fear, that while, as an object gone, she might pity and lament him, as one living, she might dread and shun him, from the persuasion of his being actually the guilty being represented: but still he was not at ease with regard to Fidelia; a suspicion of the exact situation of her new protectors was excited by Conolly's representations of what he saw; and in consequence led to fear, or rather believe her continuance with them very uncertain, he was impelled to follow to E——, for the purpose of endeavouring to ascertain this, by obtaining an interview with her, under the pretext of being delegated by her nurse to offer her an asylum in America, if no prospect of a permanent one in Ireland appeared.

Acquainted with every secret inlet to

the castle of E——, from having, in the early days of colonel Winterfield's introduction at Cliff Manor, more than once accompanied him there, and by him being assisted in exploring them, he found no difficulty in obtaining unobserved admission to it, or, through the assistance of Conolly, of remaining there; and thus was he at hand to rescue his daughter from the ruffian who had been indefatigable in tracing her steps.

Peckham was the confidential agent of Mr. and Mrs. Winterfield—a circumstance they had reason ultimately to deplore, from the base advantage he took of it, making their fears of his betraying their trust in every way subservient to his own interest.

On the death of Mr. Winterfield, his lady found herself uncontrolled mistress of his large possessions—a circumstance that so recommended her to the regard of the colonel, as to occasion a tender of his hand, which, with very little hesitation, she ac-

cepted, misled by vanity into a belief of its being entirely owing to disinterested motives. She was shortly undeceived, however; notwithstanding the necessity of dissembling, a thousand little inadvertencies betrayed the secret of the colonel's absolute indifference towards her, and decided preference for others; and in consequence he became completely disappointed in the hope with which he had married, that of obtaining entire command of her property. Availing herself of the power she had obtained over it, she frequently denied him the smallest benefit from it; and they at last became so decidedly unhappy, that on the colonel's obtaining that accession of fortune he so much required, by the unexpected devolvement of the entailed title of Oldbury, he separated himself from her, nor again became reconciled.

His desertion affected her in a manner that brought on ill health; and thus prevented flying from herself to banish thought, reflections were awakened, that

gradually compelled a secret acknowledgement of her unhappiness being but a merited punishment for that she had occasioned to others: in a word, the wrongs of Glenmore began now to be revenged, from the remorse they excited in her mind. To try and stifle this, she made her declining health a pretext for removing from place to place; but change of scene could not banish recollection; and at last, as the only atonement in her power to make for the cruelty and turpitude of her past conduct, she made a settlement of the family estate of Glenmore (the title-deeds of which, as already known, her husband had, through baseness, found means to obtain) on any representative of his that might yet appear.

With this settlement Peckham was acquainted, and in consequence often wished that the vague report that prevailed in the neighbourhood of Cliff Manor, of the child that was born to Glenmore surviving, and that he could be fortunate enough to

discover her, since believing, if he did, it would be in such circumstances as might be apt to lead to a ready acceptance of any offer of independence.

With this report lady Oldbury remained unacquainted, owing to her entire renunciation of her native country; but dwelling on the mind of Peckham, it occasioned him to be for ever on the watch for its confirmation. Yet perhaps the mingled likeness of Fidelia to her unfortunate parents might have failed of exciting a belief of the desired discovery being made, but for the evidence of the ring given by her nurse; it had belonged to her father, and was perfectly remembered by Peckham; and what so natural as that it should have been left with his daughter as a parting gift? but whilst he remembered it, it was still without knowing the history appertaining to it.

The rash temper and strong prejudices of the earl of Fitzossory have been already mentioned; through these he got himself

involved with a set of turbulent and disaffected spirits, in a manner that, if discovered, could not have failed of alike endangering his honour and safety. By chance this came to the knowledge of Glenmore, then but a youth; and by immediately apprising the earl of the perilous predicament in which he stood, he timely interposed between him and probable destruction.

The gratitude of the earl, it may be supposed, was great, and became unbounded, when, in the course of a few days after, the gallant and generous youth, who had already acted like a guardian angel to him, became also the preserver of his youthful heir, who, in attempting to spring across a deep torrent, fell in, and, from the rapidity of the current, must have perished, but for Glenmore, who was near enough to see the accident, and who, plunging after him, at the risk of his own life saved his. As a memento of gratitude, the ring so often mentioned was given him by his

grandfather, to be presented to his preserver; it was one of the costliest gems in possession of the earl, and valued above all others by him, from having long been considered a kind of heirloom in the family. But to such a proof of it lord Fitzossory would not have restricted his gratitude, had he been in the kingdom at the time of Glenmore's misfortunes; but unfortunately for him, he was then absent on the Continent with his grandson, and when he returned, Glenmore was gone. Deep and lasting was his regret for his disastrous fate, poignant that he had not earlier been acquainted with the cruel desertion of the Winterfields, that he might have made amends for their inhumanity and fickleness, by taking Glenmore under his own immediate patronage.

A vague report of his leaving a child also reached his ear, as well as that of others; but he inquired into it without being able to ascertain its truth. His grandson was now old enough to be made

acquainted with the full extent of his obligations to the unfortunate Glenmore; and yielding to the warm impulse of gratitude, he revealed them to him, exacting a solemn promise in return, that should chance ever discover that Glenmore had left a daughter, and that she needed a friend, he would, if thrown in his way, become that friend.

How solemnly Grandison recorded this promise within his breast—how faithfully his generous heart adhered to it, needs no recapitulation. When indeed he had reason to believe that the innocent being he strove to preserve from the wiles of a libertine was indeed the same, she whom his restless gratitude so long had sought—the daughter of the injured Glenmore—the preserver of his house's honour—the saver of his life—how acute, how overpowering were his feelings! with truth it might be said, that "love, gratitude, and pity wept at once."

But aware of the proud expectations of

his grandfather—of the satisfactory proofs he would require of this being the case, ere he would yield to the wishes her loveliness had inspired, he determined, before he disclosed these wishes, to make every requisite exertion for putting the fact beyond a doubt. In vain, however, he did this, and he accordingly remained without exactly knowing how to come to a decision, till the explanation that took place between him and Mrs. Stovendale on the subject.

The sight of the ring which had been lost by Glenmore in the chamber of his wife, and there found and secured by Caty for his child, as an indirect means of yet perhaps proving her identity, led to such inquiries on the part of Peckham, as, convincing him he had discovered what he wished, occasioned all the subsequent persecution of Fidelia.

Glenmore had early meditated revealing his story to her, as the story of a stranger, if opportunity permitted, that he might

thus ascertain its real effect upon her feelings, which might otherwise be constrained or concealed, and thus discover whether she was likely to view him with apprehension or horror, if he yet disclosed himself to her.

His narrative bore too evidently the stamp of truth, to allow her to occasion him any apprehension of that kind: pity, mingled with a strong expression of indignation for the injuries he had met with, was the only feeling it inspired; and when, by her blanched cheek, her tearful eye, he perceived this, with what difficulty did he refrain from clasping her to his heart, mingling the tears of sorrow with hers, and whispering in her wondering ear, that for a father it was hers were shed! But powerful motives withheld him—the disclosure must at present occasion anxieties and terrors, he was well aware, that must render her miserable, and on her account he was resolved at least to suspend it. A short time must now decide, from unex-

pected tidings that had reached him, whether in this life he was likely to receive any compensation for past miseries; and till this was finally ascertained, he decided on letting her remain a stranger to their connexion. To remove his torturing suspense was his chief motive for the precipitancy of his departure from E—— and journey to England; but the hope that led him on seemed delusive; and at length, after innumerable hardships, occasioned by the precautions he deemed it requisite to take, he found himself compelled to relinquish it, and again banish himself from the land of his nativity.

Oh! after his strong attachment to it being renewed by his revisit to it—after again hearing the language he was first taught to lisp—after again having all the social feelings of his nature revived by the sight of it, to be compelled to return to a dreary exile! Was the idea endurable? His daughter too—must he resign her? But how could he reconcile to himself the

selfishness of bearing her away from all that was endeared to her? Yet surely he might have the consolation of receiving the embrace of filial tenderness—of, in person, bestowing a father's benediction on her? But no——Oh, if he felt her clinging to his breast—if he heard her voice calling him father—how could he bring himself to tear himself from her—how to resign—to resist urging the claim he had upon her!

At length, after many struggles, he finally decided on departing without seeking another interview with her, and refraining from letting her know their affinity till his return to America.

How this intention was defeated, is already known; yet from his feelings for her, it would have been difficult to decide whether joy or sorrow was his predominant one, at the idea of her being the future companion of his exile.

CHAPTER V.

——————" Good masters, harm me not."

— — — — — —

" I have stolen nought, nor would, though I had found
Gold strew'd i' th' floor."

— — — — — —

——————" Our very eyes
Are sometimes, like our judgments, blind.
I tremble still with fear; but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, oh, gods! a part of it!
The dream's here still; even when I wake, it is
Without me as within me, not imagin'd, felt."

In a state of less anxiety the fugitives could not have regretted the compelled stay of a few days in the place where they had taken up their abode, from the opportunities it afforded them of viewing the romantic tracts surrounding it, and exploring scenery that, through the me-

dium of description, had often kindled their imagination, and excited their enthusiasm.

The first glimpse of day often found them literally brushing the dews away, eager to find themselves amidst scenes so beautiful and picturesque; but the sunbeam, steeped in dew, was not often one that failed of alluring either from their couch, and now seldomer than ever, owing to the restless slumbers and disturbed dreams a perturbed mind ever gives rise to.

In vain Fidelia tried to quiet hers; such terror as she now experienced was new to her, and apprehension constantly impeded the slightest enjoyment. The sudden appearance of any one—an eye turned back to gaze on them—a whispered remark, filled her with dismay; and at length she declined going out with her father, conceiving it better any exercise they chose to take should be taken asunder, lest of any surprise at home.

The second morning after this new ar-

rangement, as she was preparing breakfast, against the return of her father from the ramble he liked to take at early day, when, like the prospects of human life, the scenery becomes gradually unfolded, she was startled by suddenly beholding two strangers, under an arched gateway, on the opposite side of the road, steadily regarding the window of the room she was in. Her very heart seemed to die within her at this sight, and for a moment she had not power to move. Again then glancing at the gateway, she found the alarming strangers gone. To chance then, perhaps, was owing the alarm they had excited; still, however, she felt uneasy, and softly raising the sash, cautiously looked out to see whether they were in reality gone: instead, however, of finding they were, to her inexpressible consternation, she beheld them evidently lurking near the house.

Her terror at this became renewed; but though almost persuaded danger now

threatened her father, she knew not how to avert it, unapprised as she was of the way he would return. But the day before she had implored him to let her know, whenever he walked out, the way in which she would be likely to meet him, in case any thing unpleasant or alarming occurred during his absence; but instead of complying with her request, he had merely laughed at it, no doubt for the purpose of dissipating the fears that had suggested it, by seeming to deride them. In agony she fell on her knees, and raising her trembling hands to God, implored his still further protection for this persecuted man.—"Oh, still let the toil be spread in vain for him!" she supplicated—"still let the Divine Shield that has hitherto been interposed between him and danger be extended!"

Again she repaired to the window, and looked out; still the suspicious strangers remained in sight, and almost she had de-

cided on going out to try and intercept the return of her father, when she beheld him approaching in the direction in which they were. The light forsook her eyes at this sight; nor did she regain perception till she felt her father gently drawing her away from the window, closing it at the same moment, and drawing across it the little curtain that shaded the lower panes. —"Oh, you have escaped them then?" she said, gushing into tears, and passionately embracing him. "I thought you lost —gone, when I beheld those strangers you have just passed stepping forward to meet you, as I certainly did."

"I was indeed myself a little alarmed," said Glenmore, with a cheek paler than she had ever before seen it.

"But," and she began again to shake in every limb, "you do not think there's any real danger?"

Ere he could reply, loud voices were heard in the passage.—"Fly! fly!" ex-

claimed Fidelia, pointing to the inner room, through which there was a way of retreating.

Glenmore did not hesitate to do as implored, and had just disappeared as the strangers Fidelia had previously seen rushed in.—"Excuse my abrupt intrusion, madam," cried he who entered first; "but I feared, if I used greater ceremony, I might not see a person that is with you."

"You—you are mistaken," said the sinking Fidelia, holding by a chair for support; "there's no—no one with me."

"Come, come, ma'am, this denial won't do; I have indubitable proof to the contrary, so the gentleman may as well come forth at once."

As he spoke he made a movement towards the door by which Glenmore had retreated; but, quick as lightning, Fidelia flew to it, and placing herself before it—"No," she cried, panting with terror, uncertain whether or not her father had

really escaped, or only retired into it, "here you must not—shall not enter."

"Shall not!" with a deriding smile. "Resolute, indeed! but," calling to his companion to advance, "we shall see." And forcing Fidelia from it, he ordered it to be instantly burst open. This command was obeyed; but her father was gone.

The feelings of Fidelia at his escape may easier be conceived than described; with difficulty she suppressed a thanksgiving of rapture. But her joy was of short duration; the stranger who held her, after an exclamation of rage at the circumstance, protesting he would at least secure her.

"Me! By what right—by what authority?" she tremblingly demanded.

"Oh, don't perplex yourself by trying to understand! Be assured, at present you won't be satisfied; so come, prepare immediately to accompany me. I should be

sorry to use violence; but if you resist, I cannot avoid it."

Resist! Alas! of what avail to do so! Oh, it was but too evident they were securing her, to force information from her concerning her wretched father.—"If I must," at last she said, "oh, let me at least have some little experience of the courtesy of man to woman, by being allowed to prepare, without observation, for my departure."

"Well, well," relinquishing his hold of her, "you must make haste."

Expressing gratitude for this indulgence, Fidelia retired into the inner room, and having closed the door, and softly secured it, as well as the violence recently committed on it would permit, she hastily snatched up her bonnet and pelisse, and passing into an adjoining passage opening to the fields, by which her father had made his escape, quitted the house.

She paused not till she found herself amidst some of the intricate passes she and

her father had recently explored, with a hope, under the expectation of being here sought by her, of finding him lurking here: but in vain she cast her wildered looks around—in vain dived within the tangled copses, and peeped within the rocky cavities, till, fearful of longer continuing near the house, lest of being overtaken, she again hurried onward.

At last weakness and increasing dismay compelled her to slacken her speed. By the time she did, she found herself involved amidst the wild passes of the skirting mountains of a lake—a circumstance that added to her terror, from her total ignorance of all around them. Which way to turn—whither to betake herself, she knew not; alike she dreaded being seen, or continuing to wander about by herself, so liable to danger did she conceive she was from each. Hitherto she had escaped observation, by shunning every path that appeared beaten; but not much longer could she think of doing this, such a length

of time had elapsed in her treading and retreading her steps, that day was by this time on the decline; already the setting sun was yellow on the hills, and grey evening beginning to descend: for though the season still continued delightfully fine, so much so as often to allow a summer's warmth to be felt in the air, the days were considerably shortened, and the idea of roaming about in darkness and solitude terrified her very soul.

Yet almost at moments, in the despair of her feelings, was she reckless of obtaining shelter for her head, uncertain as she was of the fate of her father, whether at that moment he was groaning within the darksome cell of a prison, or, like her, wandering about in despair and desolation, requiring the aid of human kindness, yet fearing to seek it.—"God of heaven! but thy will be done," she cried; "how bitter is the cup we are often compelled to drink of!—how unequal seems the lot of thy creatures!"

She rose as she uttered this involuntary exclamation, from a little bank on which she had rested herself for a few minutes, and wiping away the tears that fell in large drops upon her pallid cheeks, again began to look around her, for some hovel at which to apply for shelter for the night; but in vain her eye wandered for the purpose—from the spot where she stood nothing of the kind could be seen.

Every moment added to the terror she was under; the sun was fast fading from the hills, and the savage wildness of the scene was considerably increased by the dark projecting shadows of the hour, reflected in the lake, and the cold grey tints that in every direction, but that of the west, were beginning to stea lover the sky, blending distant objects in a kind of chaotic confusion, and imparting to nearer ones a tinge of melancholy.

Aware, however, that such a habitation as she sought might easily be overlooked, from the materials she had observed the

hovels in this direction frequently composed of, such as often to render them scarcely distinguishable from the banks in which they were rooted, she examined still more narrowly, but still without discerning any hovel, or even tint of smoke giving indication of a human habitation near.

At length, advancing a little in another direction, she espied an ancient fabric, its windows shining in the rays of the setting sun, on an eminence at the other extremity of a deep intervening dell.

To approach such a place was agitating, but there seemed no alternative to her either doing so, or remaining without shelter for the night; accordingly, trying to summon courage for the purpose, she determined on venturing, trusting she should here be able to obtain a direction to some cottage that would receive her, and by deeming herself in comparative safety, she hoped she should be enabled to

collect herself sufficiently to consider what was to be done.

But infinitely more difficult than she had imagined was her approach to it, so precipitous was the descent into the hollow below; but for the serpentine sweeps which the zigzag path took amongst the bushes, she would have found it nearly impracticable, and equally so would the opposite ascent have proved, but for something of a similar description—the resting-places here and there afforded the foot by the branching roots of the old trees, stripped of their native covering by the violence of wintry torrents; but at length she gained the summit, and thus obtaining a complete view of the building she was anxious to reach, for a moment after was rivetted to the spot by a mingled feeling of awe and admiration, so impressive was the air of feudal magnificence it still retained.

This however quickly gave place to another of a less pleasing nature; the pro-

found stillness that reigned around it, and its aspect of desolation, exciting a suspicion of its being uninhabited; ravages, that at a distance were not discernible, were now apparent—most of the windows were closed or shattered—the towers that flanked it were crumbling away—grass tufted the battlements—and round the lofty arch of the gateway, surmounted by a massive tower, dusky wallflowers waved in wild luxuriance.

Still, however, as, notwithstanding its aspect of decay, it might be inhabited, Fidelia determined on examining a little farther ere she retreated. Accordingly advancing, she found herself within a spacious court, surmounted by the building. An eager glance of scrutiny was cast round her, but without any thing being discovered that could do away the impression previously received. The windows were all in the same ruinous state as on the outside; grass peered up in every direction amongst the stones; nor was any

sound to be heard, save that of her own footsteps, hollowly reverberated by the pavement.

A fearful chillness crept through her veins at finding herself in a place so desolate, and, shuddering, she began to retrace her steps, though unknowing whither she should thence bend them.

In advancing to the gateway by which she had entered, a low arched door, partly open, within the pillars that formed a cloister round the court, caught her attention, and after a moment's hesitation, she ventured to approach it, and looking in, beheld a ruined chapel, the fretted vault and broken pillars of which proclaimed what it had once been; but the greater the traces of magnificence it retained, the more affecting its present desolation was. The windows, through the gorgeous compartments of which the sun had once shed a purple glory over the scene, were now completely shattered—discolouring damps had nearly effaced the " monumental flat-

tery on the walls;" while shreds of scutcheons still hung upon the gloomy aisles, and "night's foul bird, rock'd in the spire," screamed loud, as if to fright away the accidental intruder.

From her short and involuntary survey Fidelia was turning, when the sound of loud and discordant voices reached her ear. Terrified at this sound, at the thought of perhaps encountering ruffian violence, she directly shrunk within the place, and after listening a moment, finding the voices still approaching, turned to a narrow staircase, which hastily ascending, she found herself within a long gallery. Still, however, deeming herself insecure, she hurried through, and pushing open a door that terminated it, entered a spacious but decayed chamber.

To make her escape from the building was now her object. Cautiously, therefore, she stepped across the creaking floor of this chamber to an opposite door, and after pausing a moment to listen, hearing

no sound, was in the act of advancing into another gallery beyond it, to seek for a way of getting out, when the glare of a candle suddenly flashed on her eyes, and an elderly man, coming up a narrow staircase the darkness of the place had not before allowed her to notice, suddenly stood before her.

On seeing him she involuntarily attempted to shrink back; but laying down the candle, he seized her hands, and sternly demanded her business there?

Confused, confounded, taken entirely unawares, Fidelia could not reply. Her confusion and silence made against her; and, yielding to appearances, the man, still holding her hands, called aloud for assistance.

This call was quickly obeyed, by the family hastening to the spot, for the building, after all, was occupied: after being long consigned to ruin by its original possessor, a farmer, who had taken the land immediately surrounding it, purchased it

for a trifle, and contrived to fit up a comfortable residence for himself and family within its dilapidated walls.

Dropping on her knees, the terrified Fidelia now entreated to be heard.

"Well, dang it, I wanted to hear you before," said the farmer, gruffly, "but you wouldn't speak; but I suppose by this you have been able to make out some story."

Fidelia tried to account for being found there in a simple manner; but the circumstances she had to relate were of themselves so confused, that, agitated, bewildered, as she was, she could not avoid telling them in a confused manner, so as to gain but little credit for her statement. Nothing, indeed, could seem more improbable than what she told—that she should be separated by mischance from the person under whose protection she was, and then set out in quest of him, in a place she knew nothing of; or, if true, what did this argue, but that both were under some terrible apprehension?

"No, no—it won't do," said the farmer, following up the assertion by declaring that he would that night secure her himself, and the next morning take her before a magistrate; his suspicions of her confirmed not only by the improbability of her story, but his knowledge of a band of depredators then infesting the country.

His son, who had all this time been earnestly gazing at her, now attempted to interfere in her behalf, either more given to pity, a better judge of the human countenance, or else more susceptible of the power of beauty; but the angry argument between them was quickly interrupted by the fainting of the unfortunate object that occasioned it, overcome by the horrors of her situation.

On recovering her senses she found herself stretched on a wretched pallet, ill according with the spacious chamber in which it was laid, and with the farmer's wife, and some other females of the family, busied in recovering her; for suspicious as

she appeared, still they could not help some latent touch of pity for her, and on finding her come to herself, offered her something to take; but though food had been untasted by her that day, she was now unable to accept any thing but a glass of water, which being given to her, they presently left her, being impatient to talk the affair over, taking care, however, to lock the door after them.

In what a situation did they leave the wretched fugitive! alone, forsaken, faint, without a hope or expectation of any respite from her sorrows; thus was she torn from her father—thus was she separated perhaps for ever from him. In agony of soul—in frantic desperation, she beat her throbbing temples, and starting from the recumbent attitude of fatigue and weakness, was alone prevented traversing the room with distracted steps, by an apprehension of being overheard, and thus bringing the merciless inmates of the place again around her, under an idea of her at-

tempting her escape—her escape! alas! how impossible! the windows were strongly grated, while, destitute almost of a pane, the wind of night blew in with chilling dampness at them.

Confined, imprisoned, again and again she felt the iron bars, to be assured she was not under the influence of a delirious dream; but, oh no! the iron entered into her very soul, but too truly convincing her of the reality of her wretchedness; and on the morrow—the dreaded morrow—she was to be dragged forward, to experience still greater horrors—to be exposed to the rude stare of clownish curiosity—to have her misery mocked at—her hesitation misconstrued—the blushes of shame interpreted into those of guilt, while a loathsome cell perhaps awaited her! True, from the horrors she anticipated she expected to be relieved in a degree, by the interposition of the friends she meant to apply to in her behalf. But the shame, the obloquy she must encounter—could

she be relieved from this? and her father too—oh! if still free, and by any chance he learnt what had befallen her, to what desperation might it not drive him! But she could not flatter herself that he had escaped pursuit—that he was not at that moment bound, fettered, secured, no more to breathe the vital air of liberty—no more to enjoy the sweet repose of conscious freedom.

"Oh, unfortunate, unfortunate!" she exclaimed, beating her bosom; "have thy wandering steps led thee back to thy native land but to conduct thee to an ignominious death within it?"

Exhausted, she at length threw herself upon the pallet, where a stupor stole over her senses, from which the twittering of the birds at early day awoke her. Again she started up, and looked round her with wild dismay—again felt the fastenings of the windows. The fresh breeze, the balmy air, blew in upon her cold ashy cheek, without reviving her; the splendour of the rising sun was almost intolerable to

her—" For oh, where," she groaned in anguish, " does the dim eye of my father meet the glorious beams?"

Yet well adapted was the scene without to banish all sadness but despair. The room in which she was imprisoned was in one of the towers that flanked the building, and which, projecting some way beyond the others, allowed a most extensive view of the adjacent scenery—of that rude, that dread magnificence, for which this part of the kingdom is celebrated.

" Along the narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,
And here and there a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crown'd.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of the craggy mound
The perched eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings to shoot athwart the sky."

The sound of laughter roused her from her deep abstraction—it fell discordantly on her ear.—" And, oh! justly has it been," she sighed, " that in this unhappy state little do we know of the sufferings of each

other! that while some are even luxuriating in a superabundance of the blessings of this life, others are withering in all the despondency of gloom and despair. Did those from whom that laugh just proceeded but know the ear of wretchedness it reached, the joyous feeling that gave rise to it would perhaps be checked."

Still continuing at the window, she suddenly beheld a party of early sportsmen scattering themselves over the grounds. One approached the tower with his dogs —good Heaven! did she see right—was it Grandison she beheld? She shrieked at the joyful, the rapturous recognition; but the shrill cries of the dogs, and loud shouts of his companions, prevented her voice being heard. She thrust her hands through the bars, but finding herself still unnoticed, she ran shrieking to the door, as if fearing in another minute Grandison would be lost to her view.

Her cries soon succeeded in bringing not only the farmer, but the whole of the

family, to the chamber.—" Beest turned crazy?" cried the farmer, as he entered.

Without attending to this question, seizing him by the arm, Fidelia dragged him to the window—" There, there!" she exclaimed, pointing to the now-receding Grandison—" there, there is a friend that will protect—that will explain who I am —that will prove me innocent—incapable of what you suspect—Fly after him, I conjure you."

" Fly after him! dang it! not so easily said as done. You must first get me a pair of wings. Wouldn't running a bit do as well?"

" Oh! do not trifle with my misery, I implore—I beseech you go after him."

" Well, and what then?"

" Tell him there's a person here—a person in deep distress—that wants to speak to him."

" But dost think he'll come?"

" Oh yes, I know, I feel he will."

" Dang it! but this will be comical if

thee shouldst know any of the great folks that came down yesterday to my lord Borrowdale's, to shoot a bit here!—But go, Joe, and tell that tall spark yonder, in the green jacket, there beest a wench here wants to speak to him; and, hearkee, should he not like to coom, be ye sure to say she has got a good face of her own, and dang it but he then will."

"Take this ring," said Fidelia, taking the one so often mentioned from her finger, on which she now wore it, "and tell him that the person who owns it requires to see him directly."

Stupidly staring at the ring, Joe retired. The interval of expectation was but short —in a few minutes Joe returned to say the gentleman was coming, and at the same time giving a wink to the farmer and his family, they withdrew.

Fidelia now endeavoured to collect herself, and adjust her disordered garments. While thus employed she heard an approaching step. She started forward to

meet her expected deliverer, but instead of him beheld Peckham entering.

With a shriek of disappointment, astonishment, and terror, she started back at seeing him.

"You are surprised," he said, with a ghastly grin; "but don't be alarmed—perhaps you may have reason to rejoice at seeing me. I have learnt the predicament you are in; the woman of this house is my sister, and one word from me would be sufficient to extricate you from your present distress; but that shall not be uttered, except you are honest in your confession; and indeed, from what I already know, you may as well be so. I know already that your father still lives—that he has returned from exile, and discovered himself to you, and that it is through his means you are now in this perplexity."

"Good God! how had he ascertained all this?" Fidelia was on the point of demanding, but checked herself, from the reflection, that the interrogation would be

an acknowledgment of the truth of his assertion.

"You fear to trust me," he continued, "because, I suppose, your father has represented me as having been an enemy of his. I certainly was once so, but not from any personal hatred to him, but because I thought myself ill-treated and injured on his account. I claimed relationship with the late Mr. Winterfield, but his unnatural pride made him deny the claim, because I had neither fortune nor consequence. But though his arrogance made him scorn me as a connexion, his selfishness led him to engage me as a servant; he found I could be serviceable to him, and the destitute condition I was in at the time made me accept his protection on the terms he chose to offer it—that of never disclosing our relationship. By degrees I gained his confidence, but still I was kept in the background; and when at length I saw your father, a total stranger to his blood and name, adopted, caressed, seated at the

board from which I was banished like a menial, and brought up to believe he should inherit the whole of the fortune I had helped to increase, can you wonder I should view him with envy and malice? If you do, those at least better acquainted with human nature will not. But I have long repented me of the ill-will I bore him, and will now prove the sincerity of that repentance, if you give me opportunity; not with any intention, I give you my word, of renewing a suit, that long since you gave me such convincing proofs of being disagreeable—But I will not press the matter, lest my urgency should excite suspicion. All I shall further say is, that if I am distrusted, I shall let things take their course, without any further intermeddling."

Oh, how did Fidelia at this moment wish for the power of looking into the human heart! Alike she feared to trust or appear to doubt Peckham. What he said was plausible; but still his counte-

nance was so repelling, the disgust and suspicion he had previously inspired so strong, that she knew not what to do. Again was she on the point of questioning him, relative to the manner in which he had become acquainted with her father, but again checked herself, from the confirmation she knew such a question must be of his assertion.

"You still hesitate then?" he said. "Well, act as your own judgment dictates; but there is not much longer time for deliberation, for I must soon be setting off for Wiltshire, on business with lady Oldbury."

Fidelia clasped her hands, and looked up to heaven, as if imploring divine direction at the moment. All she had to dread then, if there was no interference for her, the anger, the resentment, she would probably excite, if still appearing to entertain suspicion, rushed upon her mind, and at length impelled the confession Peckham was so solicitous for.

With a kind of greedy attention he seemed to listen to her, devouring every word she uttered.—"Well," he cried, when she had concluded, "we must take immediate measures for endeavouring to discover your father, if still at liberty, as I trust he is: his anxiety about you will doubtless keep him lurking a little longer in the neighbourhood where you were. I'll directly send thither a person well acquainted with it, and he shall take charge of this ring, that in case of encountering him, your father may have no hesitation in committing himself to his guidance."

Fidelia could think of no better plan; and with reviving hope of extrication from her present distress, she saw the deputed messenger depart. Immediately after she was freed from her confinement, the farmer's wife and daughter came to offer their services; and having refreshed herself, by accepting a change of clothes from the latter, she proceeded with them to the

great flagged hall, where breakfast was prepared for the family.

But still, notwithstanding the fair seeming of Peckham, she wished it had been to Grandison that she was indebted for deliverance from the toil in which she had been caught, and still she wished for his further aid and counsel; but after more than once trying to hint this wish to Peckham, she gave up the attempt, lest of offending him, so captious did he appear.

She could not forbear, however, inquiring what at this time had brought him to the place, and learned that he was in the habit of paying frequent visits to Scotland, and always in his way there and back again, stopped at the residence of his brother-in-law, which he had just reached that morning, as the lad sent in quest of Grandison was leaving it.

For the remainder of the day every thing was done that could quiet the mind of Fidelia. The farmer's daughter, in particular, devoted herself to her, taking her

over the once-extensive gardens of the place, and through its various chambers, still retaining, like its exterior, vestiges of what it had once been; and with a heart comparatively lightened, she sunk to repose at night.

While dressing the next morning, with a hope that the day would not close without her anxiety about her father being terminated, her chief companion of the preceding day burst into her chamber, to say her uncle was impatient to see her. All her agitation renewed by this intimation, she hastened to him, and learned that he had just received a letter from his messenger, acquainting him with his having succeeded in meeting her father, and that they would both follow as quickly as the precautions they deemed it advisable to use would allow.

The feelings of Fidelia at this intimation may easier be conceived then described. In a transport of joy and gratitude she seized the hand of Peckham, and en-

folding it between hers, implored him to forgive her ever having entertained a thought to his prejudice. But her feelings underwent an immediate change on Peckham's intimating it was expedient they should set out by themselves for lady Oldbury's, in order to prevent the risk her father would incur by being seen with her again, after what had recently occurred.

Most unwillingly did Fidelia accede to this necessity: assured, however, that she might hope to be speedily joined by her father, when, in concert with lady Oldbury, every requisite measure would be taken for ensuring his safety, she at length consented to set out by herself with Peckham, not, however, till she had written a letter, expressive of all she hoped and wished, to her father.

They travelled expeditiously, and in due course of time reached lady Oldbury's. Without appearing to notice the surprise manifested by the servants at their arrival

together, Peckham inquired for their lady, and finding she could immediately receive them, desired directly to be shewn to her.

He was obeyed, and followed by the trembling Fidelia, over whom a sudden sensation of terror had stolen, at something she conceived like a sudden alteration in his manner, entered her ladyship's dressing-room, where, pale, emaciated, and apparently more exhausted than ever, she lay reclined on a sofa, with, to the inexpressible astonishment of Fidelia, lady Castle Dermot seated beside her.

The fact was, the latter, alarmed and displeased by the departure of her son for Bath, aware as she was of the influence to which it was owing, had lost no time in following, from a hope that her interference might prevent the consequences she dreaded from a continuance of the intimacy between him and lady Caroline.

The public prints made known her arrival to lady Oldbury, which was the day

after the imagined elopement of Fidelia with lord Castle Dermot. They were seen going off together by a domestic of lady Oldbury's, who knew his person, and on finding he was the partner of Fidelia's flight, she availed herself of her knowledge of his mother's arrival in Bath to write to her immediately on the subject, and request to see her, that they might consult what was to be done.

But the surprise of Fidelia, at the unexpected sight of lady Castle Dermot, was slight, compared to that evinced by her ladyship and lady Oldbury, at her returning accompanied by Peckham.

Peckham did not long permit them to continue to wonder at it. Ascertaining that the door was closed, he proceeded coolly and circumstantially to account for it, concluding his detail by the assertion of Glenmore being by that time in safe custody of his friends in Cumberland—"Where he shall remain," he said, "till

delivered into still securer, except the conditions I propose for permitting him to escape the punishment long pending over him are complied with."

Merciful Powers! was she then deceived?—was she then accessary to the committal, to the probable destruction of her father? Had she then drawn the toil which had been so long spread for him? —" Oh, folly! credulity unpardonable!" exclaimed the distracted Fidelia, " to believe, after what I heard, that faith or generosity could find harbour in that breast!"

Franticly she threw herself at the villain's feet, imploring his mercy—his recollection of the manner in which he had imposed on her belief. Lady Oldbury united her entreaties, but he was inflexible, inexorable to tears, to prayers, to entreaties, and shaking off the suppliants, he told them, in one word, he was unalterably determined how to act.

" What then is it you require—you de-

mand?" asked the almost-expiring lady Oldbury.

"To have the possessions I have a right to secured to me," he firmly replied, "either by this second proof of your folly and injustice becoming mine, or else by your undoing all you have done for her."

"Good God!" exclaimed the trembling lady Oldbury, with a hectic glow of indignation for a moment on her ashy cheek, "could you imagine the daughter of Glenmore would ever consent to become yours? or can you be so cruel as to require I should give up the power of making atonement for the injuries I have done?"

"Choose," he sternly replied. "The conditions I have proposed are complied with, or I give up Glenmore to the fate he merits. 'Tis now my time to triumph: too long was I kept in obscurity through your means. The fortune you wish to give to others, is mine by right, as the kinsman of your deceased husband, and I should be a fool indeed to allow you to

will away my inheritance. If you have committed crimes, it is not by robbing others you are to make reparation for them."

In vain she renewed her solicitations for some mitigation of these hard conditions; and at length terrified lest in a paroxysm of fury he should depart, Fidelia interfered to implore no longer hesitation about them. Oh, what to her was the idea of fortune, trembling as she was for the fate of a persecuted parent!—oh, what its sacrifice, if it saved her from the sacrifice of herself to such a wretch! In short, he prevailed: the settlement by which Fidelia would have been put in possession of the estate of her ancestors was cancelled; the will subsequently made, bequeathing her the remainder of lady Oldbury's property, destroyed.

Scarcely were these deeds cancelled, when, overpowered by grief, terror, and unappeasable remorse, lady Oldbury was conveyed to her bed, with but very little

hope or expectation of her ever rising from it.

Lady Castle Dermot now urged her to quit the house, and accompany her to her lodgings in Bath, there to await the termination of their suspense about lady Oldbury.

To quit the house the moment every thing requisite for the abdication of her rights was done, was the intention of Fidelia, but for the purpose alone of rejoining her father, for whose fate, while still within the grasp of the perfidious Peckham, she yet trembled.

Lady Castle Dermot opposed this intention, or rather the one she avowed of accompanying him to America, as one idle and romantic in the extreme, dwelling on the cruel selfishness he would be guilty of, if he permitted her to be the partner of his dreary banishment: but in vain she argued; the voice of united affection and duty was resistless; and Fidelia

was in the very act of setting out, when the object of her strong solicitude stood before her.

Her rapture at again beholding him, after all they had gone through, was inexpressible: but scarcely were the first transports of their meeting over, ere ecstacy gave way to apprehension for his safety. To her utter dismay and astonishment she saw he had taken no precautions for disguising his person, and aware as she was of the possibility, or rather probability of his being recollected by many of the present domestics of lady Oldbury, she trembled to think what the consequences of this strange imprudence might be. How could he have been capable of a thing of the kind? With a supplication for his immediate retiring, almost a reproach was mingled for this apparently-cruel temerity; but suddenly again catching her in his arms—again clasping her to his agitated breast, and kissing away the tears that

were fast falling on his account, he bade her dismiss all fear from her mind, there being nothing more to dread for him.

Good God! was there then an end of her long-harrowing fears? But it was requisite to enter upon an immediate explanation, to convince her of the transporting reality of what she heard.

Haunted by one fearful idea, Glenmore had not the slightest doubt, from what had occurred, that he had been discovered and traced. Sick of existence, from the one unvarying scene of suffering it had been to him, he would now perhaps have turned to face his enemies, but for the consideration of his unfortunate child. On her account, at least, he wished to avoid a death of violence, to prevent her shedding any other tears than those of natural regret for his loss. He accordingly fled; but distracted by the idea of what she must endure from apprehension about him, he resolved on remaining concealed

in the neighbourhood till he had endeavoured to ascertain something about her.

The person deputed by Peckham to seek him out was proceeding for the purpose, when he encountered an Irishman of the name of Mooney, who was often in the habit of coming from Scotland to meet Peckham, with whom he had some secret transactions, at his master's house, and who was consequently well known to him.

After a little chat on meeting, Mooney inquired where he was going in such a hurry? and without hesitation Joe informed him, glad of an opportunity of imparting what he conceived a very strange business to any one.

Mooney listened to him with profound attention, and not without appearing somewhat agitated more than once while listening to him. When he had heard all he had to communicate, he desired to see the ring which was to be the means of getting Glenmore to betray himself into his power, and having examined it attentively, re-

turned it to him, and suddenly after proposed accompanying him.

Joe readily acceded to the proposal, aware that a companion would shorten the way, and besides, that he might perhaps stand in need of assistance and advice. With every lurking-place in the neighbourhood he was perfectly acquainted, and aided as he was by his companion, was so indefatigable in exploring them, as at length to succeed in discovering the person he sought; but ere he had time to present the ring to him, Mooney, who had strangely muffled himself, so as completely to disguise himself, desired to speak in private with Glenmore, and the result of that conference was the termination of all farther anxiety about his safety. In fact, the injuries of the Winterfields were even greater towards him than he had imagined: the person believed to have fallen a victim to his fury escaped with a wound.

This circumstance was quickly made known to the Winterfields, but who, in-

spired with that deadly hatred towards him which is but too often experienced for those we are conscious of meriting reproach from, determined on using measures for its concealment, that thus they might, through the punishment the supposed crime would draw upon him, succeed in getting rid of a person whose name and sight were a constant reproach to them, and to whom their barbarous conduct would then in a degree be justified.

Peckham, ready to undertake any scheme of villany, was the person employed on the occasion, and managed matters so dexterously, as to accomplish getting Mooney, the supposed victim of Glenmore, out of the kingdom, without a suspicion being once excited of his having survived the violence he had met with.

But he could not succeed in preventing his being troublesome to those who had made him instrumental to the gratification of their hatred. Wants he had never before dreamt of, now became imperious,

from the indulgences he had the power of granting himself, and he was continually applying for money.

These applications Peckham failed not to make known to his employers; but the supplies he obtained he by no means appropriated to the intended use; and at length, after a lapse of years, Mooney, either enraged, suspicious, or in actual want, became so importunate, that Peckham found there was no other way of pacifying him than by occasionally seeing him; and accordingly, from time to time, contrived meetings at the house of his brother-in-law in Cumberland, Mooney having taken up his residence in a remote district of Scotland. Still, however, he continued dissatisfied. Compunctious feelings were at length awakened, and united to a suspicion of being imposed upon by Peckham, were beginning to excite a vague idea of avowing the cruelty he had been accessary to, when his en-

counter with the messenger of Peckham decided the point.

What the feelings of Glenmore were at the discovery, at finding that he was no longer a proscribed being—that he might again meet the light of day without shrinking—again encounter his fellow-men without apprehension, may easier be imagined than described.

Accompanied by Mooney, he immediately set out for lady Oldbury's, for the double purpose of having all the depositions requisite to his restoration to the privileges he had so long been deprived of made, and of relieving the torturing anxiety he was aware his daughter was enduring on his account.

He arrived too late, however, to prevent the plans of Peckham from being in a degree successful; yet in his grateful joy at the acquittal of the deed he had so long been accused of, the insurance of his safety, and the restoration of his daughter, a

little time elapsed ere he could bring himself to think of the circumstance. But when at length the subsiding of tumultuous emotions allowed him to reflect, he shrunk with chilling dismay at the gloomy prospect before him, deprived as he was of all hope or expectation of future independence in his native country—of there returning, after all his long and painful wanderings, and being at peace at last.

His sister-in-law, however, lady Castle Dermot, did not permit him to brood uninterruptedly over this melancholy prospect: her delight at beholding him was unutterable; and with all the ardent vehemence of her nature, insisting on his giving up all idea of returning to America, she made it a point that her residence should in future be his.

Again did he conceive he had cause for gratitude, and again was he yielding to the soothing idea of returning to the scenes of his early youth, when lady Castle Dermot, anxious to put out of doubt the ac-

complishment of the wishes she had again formed, proposed that their interests and solicitude should for the future be rendered inseparable, by the union of her son with Fidelia.

To this proposal Glenmore at present could make no objection; on the contrary, unacquainted as he was with the real character of lord Castle Dermot, and strongly attached to the countess, he was delighted at it; to have his daughter securely established in life, and no storm he believed could blow that would materially affect him.

But the delight just mentioned only lasted till he had a conference with Fidelia on the subject. She was not present at the time the proposition was made; but by the desire of her ladyship, he quickly sought her out, for the purpose of making it known to her.

Fidelia listened to him with the deepest regret, aware as she was, from what she already knew of the temper and disposition

of her aunt, of the deep resentment she was likely to feel from her rejection of it. Almost she wished from this dread—from the pleasure she saw it would afford her father to have her accept it, that her heart had been free from any previous attachment; but devoted as it was to another —to a lover she had reason to believe no change of circumstance could estrange from her, she felt it impossible to do so; and also that even if this were not the case, lord Castle Dermot was a person she never could voluntarily have accepted, so light and frivolous, not to say worse of it, did she consider his character.

But not to disappoint the fond wishes of her father without proving it unavoidable, she now, for the first time, entered into the particulars of her acquaintance with Grandison—the prepossession it had gradually led to on either side—his recent proposal—the motive that had influenced her to decline it, and the promise she had given of yet writing such an explanatory

letter to him as should justify her of all caprice in his eyes.

Her happiness was her father's sole object, and from the exalted character he had previously learned of colonel Grandison, he had reason to believe it would be secured by an union with him. Still, however, he could not avoid regretting the disappointment of the generous wish, as he considered it, of lady Castle Dermot, for a nearer alliance. But this regret could not lead him to attempt laying any restraint on the affection of his daughter: it would, indeed, he conceived, be the height of base ingratitude could she waver in her regard for Grandison, after the proofs of real disinterested attachment he had given her.

By no means as well acquainted with the real disposition of lady Castle Dermot as Fidelia was, he trusted her good sense would reconcile her to the disappointment that awaited her: but to his inexpressible surprise he found no arguments or expos-

tulations could do so; and when at length she found it impossible to prevail on him to insist on Fidelia's compliance with her wishes, she gave way to the most violent rage; and after reproaching him with ingratitude, plainly intimated that if he still remained inexorable to her solicitations, she must cease to wish for any further intercourse with him or his daughter.

Fidelia tried by tears, by supplications, by almost kneeling to her, to soften or subdue her resentment. Jealous of her preference for Grandison, indignant at her inflexibility to her wishes, nothing could appease her angry feelings: with equal passion and contempt she threw the distressed suppliant from her, and ordering her carriage, directly left the house.

Her abrupt departure, or rather her utter renunciation of them, placed Glenmore and Fidelia in a most cruel predicament, unknowing as they were at the moment which way to turn. The house of lady Oldbury at present afforded them a shel-

ter; but of this they shortly expected to be deprived by her death; for even if their feelings would have permitted their continuing in a house of which their inveterate persecutor Peckham would then be master, they were convinced he would not suffer it. But from utter despair Fidelia was kept by the hope she still clung to, of finding, in the friendship of Mrs. Stovendale, and the persevering constancy of Grandison, relief and consolation.

Lady Castle Dermot had taken upon herself to explain to Mrs. Stovendale, with an entreaty to make known to others, all the occurrences that had lately taken place, and in reply had received a brief but warm congratulation from her on them—the happy restoration of Glenmore to his friends and country, and re-union with his daughter.

For one not being immediately addressed to her, Fidelia accounted at the time by the intimation given in the letter of Mrs. Stovendale of her being compelled

by a particular circumstance to a hasty departure from Bath: but her anxiety now to hear from her could no longer be controlled, or rather the feelings that impelled her to address her; and accordingly after the departure of lady Castle Dermot, she lost no time in yielding to them.

Not knowing her address, the letter was sent to lady De Bellemont's, to be forwarded to her. After some days of anxious expectation, an answer was received. With a hand trembling with agitation and impatience, Fidelia broke the seal, anticipating all that was cheering, that was delightful, from its contents—how heightened was the bitter anguish it inflicted by this anticipation! The congratulation she had previously offered on the happy disclosure relative to her father was repeated; but instead of sympathizing with her on the unhappiness she had expressed relative to her cruel renouncement by her aunt, or, as Fidelia fully expected from previous acts and professions, assur-

ing her that her house, her heart, were open to her and her long-persecuted parent, she merely advised her to endeavour to regain the power of profiting by the disinterested generosity of the countess, by trying to appease the resentment she had excited in her mind; concluding with a forced assurance, as it appeared to Fidelia, that she might rely on her best wishes for her welfare and happy establishment in life being hers; but without the slightest allusion throughout the letter to any one Fidelia wished to hear of Hastings, Albina, or Grandison.

The sudden chill thrown upon her glowing feelings occasioned a sickness almost deadly. Cold, trembling, disgusted at what seemed to her the hollow-heartedness of the world, at the moment, the letter fell from her hand, as she sank upon the bosom of her father, who, on seeing the change in her countenance, hastened to her support.

Some minutes elapsed ere she had the

power to answer his anxious interrogations. At length a violent gush of tears came to her relief, and permitted the desired explanation.—"But oh! to what could such conduct be owing!" she wildly demanded, as she gave it. "Was the nature of Mrs. Stovendale really insincere, or had some new enemy started up to destroy her friendship and regard? and Grandison too!" involuntarily covering her face as she mentioned his name, and recalled the manner in which she had dwelt on his ardent professions—his strongly intimated attachment to her father.—"Oh! had they then at last been led to follow the cruel example of others—to abjure their plighted professions of regard to her, and throw her off a prey to misfortune!"

But there was no time for calmly weeping over the circumstance; the life of lady Oldbury was fast ebbing to a close, and ere the lapse almost of another hour, they might be destitute of a home: but where were they to seek for one? On the wild

shore of a foreign clime they could not have felt more destitute, more isolated than they did where they now were. Situated as he was, Glenmore saw no alternative but returning to America.

Fidelia started with recoiling dread at the idea; she wrung her hands despairingly, and in passionate agony of soul was ready to throw herself on the ground. Yet what was there to attach her to the spot she so tenaciously clung to? She no longer had lover or friend; she was renounced, despised, forsaken by all whom she loved—by all who appeared to have loved her; yet still in despair at the thought of quitting it, she felt as if she could grasp the very sods of the earth—cling to the very fibres of the rocks: but her feelings were under the dominion of reason—the burst of anguish over, she recollected herself, and determined to bend resignedly to circumstances.

On the unexpected testimony of Mooney himself to his being still in existence, a

vague intimation of which he had received through some of his connexions who had emigrated to that part of America where Glenmore had taken up his abode, and an endeavour to ascertain the truth of which was one of his motives (it is here necessary to mention) for returning to his native country, Glenmore wrote to the place where he had left Conolly, to acquaint him with the circumstance, and desire that, as he no longer needed his services, he might not delay returning for his parents to America, who waited for his rejoining them, to come back to Ireland.

To embark in the same vessel with him was the anxious wish of Glenmore, not merely from a conviction of the comfort that would be derived from his attentions on board, but in order to try and prevent, on Fidelia's account, the return of his parents from America, aware of the consolation she must derive from having her nurse with her.

Accordingly they made immediate pre-

parations for following him to Ireland, to which, in the answer he returned to Glenmore's letter, he had intimated his intention of proceeding, for the purpose of taking his passage from the port of D—— for America.

A few minutes before their quitting her house, lady Oldbury breathed her last, sincerely penitent for the cruelty she had been guilty of, but without having the consolation of thinking she had been able to make any atonement for it. Her evident wish to do so, however, had the effect of softening the resentment of those she had injured, and inducing a fervent hope, that in the sight of Heaven it might be considered some expiation of her offences.

They travelled with the utmost expedition to Bristol, and thence embarked for D——. Glenmore's first inquiry on landing was after Conolly; and to his inexpressible consternation, he discovered he had arrived too late—Conolly had sailed

the preceding day, in the only American vessel then in the port, or expected for some time.

To remain in D——, even if pecuniary circumstances had permitted it, was not endurable, from the dread of recognition. The proud soul of Glenmore shrunk from being discovered, situate as he now was; all that he had experienced from malignant envy, from upstart insolence, and the triumph of little minds, dwelt bitterly on his recollection, and made him shrink from encountering such again. To avoid this risk, he resolved on hiding himself in obscurity, till opportunity occurred for finally departing. With the wild and lonely track along the coast, beyond Strandstown, he was well acquainted, and here he proposed to Fidelia their seeking a temporary shelter.

She readily consented, not less anxious than he was to be out of the way of encountering any eye familiar with her features.

A car being procured for her accommodation, they accordingly set out on their search. They had to pass through Strandstown; and as they approached it, Fidelia could not avoid recalling the very different feelings with which, but a short time before, she had travelled that road with the Bryerlys, when, notwithstanding her dependant situation, the hope she indulged of yet discovering the Beaumonts, and being rescued by their kindness from what was disagreeable to her, gave a serenity to her mind, a cheerfulness to her spirits, that enabled her to derive pleasure and amusement from what she saw. Nothing of the kind now remained; there was no hope, no expectation of happier days, and the deepest dejection weighed upon her soul. But if she was so affected by the review of the places she was now passing, from the reflections they excited, how still more cruelly was her father, from the still more poignant recollections they awakened in his mind! Not a spot, not an object

did he now behold, that did not revive the memory of some affecting circumstance—some departed joy or inflicted injury. Again he lived over in imagination the few happy days of his careless infancy—again he wept over his disastrous passion—again he heard the wild shrieks of his wife, as she was torn from his arms, never, never more to be enfolded within them—again he shed the sullen tear of despair, as he saw the shores of his native land receding from his view.—"And this gloomy, this disastrous day is drawing towards a close," he cried, "without a ray of sunshine to illume it—still, still a banished man. The green sods of my native earth will not cover my cold breast, nor any race of mine mention my name in the bowers of my fathers."

Still keeping along the coast, they came to a solitary house belonging to a seafaring man, who, during his occasional absences, left it in charge of a neighbouring farmer,

to be let if opportunity offered. Nothing possibly could be more retired; and Glenmore finding the terms as moderate as he could desire, quickly came to a decision about it; and taking possession, a cabin-girl was engaged as an attendant.

Here then was a short rest for the wanderers, as they might justly be termed; but a rest not calculated to be beneficial, deepening into absolute gloom and despair (as did the terrible loneliness of their situation, though desirable from circumstances) their melancholy. Even buoyant spirits could hardly have resisted its influence—its effect upon spirits previously depressed, may therefore easily be imagined. The restless ocean extended in front, for ever raging against the cliffs that on this part of the coast form innumerable little bays and creeks, inviting to the eye, but too often fatally dangerous to the inexperienced mariner, who, if once embayed within them, finds it scarcely possible to

prevent his vessel being dashed to pieces against the rocks that lie concealed in the water.

The country around had the appearance of a desert, from its aspect of sterility, and the few signs of inhabitation there were. Here and there a miserable hovel started to view, that but for the clouds of smoke that issued from the entrance, or rose through a hole in the roof, might have been mistaken for one of the rocks that were scattered over the thistley fields; but any thing like a comfortable dwelling was not to be seen within miles; there was nothing to relieve the ear or eye. To the incessant noise of the waves, was added the whining cry of the gulls that thronged the adjacent cliffs, ceaseless whenever a storm was approaching; while the few solitary beings that dwelt in the vicinity had every appearance of extreme wretchedness.

The misty weather of November did not tend to enliven the prospect; and without any thing to diversify the dull mono-

tony of their lives, or divert their imagination, that feeling of dreariness and desolation was gradually excited, that sinks the spirit to the earth, and renders life a burthen. For the sake of each other, both now and then made exertions to shake off the dull apathy that was stealing over their senses. If a fine day occurred—a little sunshine gilded the sterile and faded fields, they were wont to sally forth, but were still prevented getting to any distance, by the nature of the roads, that in this direction had more the appearance of deep ravines, formed by wintry torrents, than any thing made by men.

To impress them still more with the cheerless idea of their situation, they often found it difficult to obtain the neeessaries they required; Strandstown, the nearest place to which they could send for animal food, was too distant to permit them often to be able to do so, so that a few eggs, procured by chance, or a little fish, was often their sole sustenance for days; and thus

there was already that appearance of poverty at their board that their misgiving minds too fearfully anticipated.

Fidelia at times tried to shake off the dejection that oppressed her; while she had such a friend as a father to cling to, why, she demanded of herself, should she feel so forlorn? But when she thought of what she might yet be destined to endure, that the frail link that alone connected her with a foreign clime, might yet, where she would literally be a stranger, be torn away, her spirit almost died within her.

But she had yet to endure more; her father, who, while he himself alone had suffered, had hitherto borne up under his afflictions, now sunk beneath the idea of her being a participator in them. The thought of occasioning misery to the daughter as well as to the mother, as he accused himself of doing, was not supportable; a sallow hue overspread his countenance—his health gradually declined—and

at length a slow nervous fever completely subdued his strength.

Impelled by the most alarming apprehensions, Fidelia would now have written to her aunt, deprecating the resentment she had unhappily inspired, and soliciting that kindness from her, in this extremity, which she could not think of imploring from any other; but, till out of suspense about his fate, Glenmore interdicted the measure, reckless too of existence, and fearful besides, that if he allowed her either in this instance to act as she wished, that discovery might take place, that from a feeling of pride not to be subdued, he shrunk from. He also prevented her obtaining any medical assistance for him; so that every day added to her agonizing solicitude about him.

Some days elapsed in this manner, when, to complete her misery, the man who had let them the house came to inform them that the person it belonged to

was dead, and that he had appointed his commanding officer his executor, who having come into port, had sent an intimation of his intention of being there in a day or two, for the purpose of giving directions to have it immediately sold, according to the will of the testator. To be obliged to seek another habitation at such a crisis was terrible to her imagination, yet almost she feared it unavoidable: at length it occurred to her, that perhaps by stating the danger that would attend a removal to her father at present, the executor might be induced to allow them to remain a little longer in it, she resolved on seeing him, though most unpleasant to her feelings the thought of introducing herself to a stranger at present.

At the time expected he arrived, and trying to compose her agitated spirits, Fidelia presently repaired to the room where he was; but what was her surprise on entering it, what her confusion for a minute, from the opinion she was but too well con-

vinced he harboured of her, at beholding captain Cleveland!

Carelessly turning from a window at which he was standing, he was preparing to inquire the business on which he understood she wished to speak with him, when surprise at discovering who it was that desired an interview checked him.

Had she still been withheld from explaining the circumstances that had involved her in so awkward and distressing a dilemma with regard to him, Fidelia would have found it impossible to have recovered from the confusion and agitation occasioned by this unexpected meeting; but at liberty now to account for these, and thus vindicate herself of the charge of impropriety, she quickly recovered herself sufficiently to enter upon the detail she had often before wished for an opportunity of giving, and which she now prefaced by intimating that wish.

As she proceeded, the look of mingled reserve, disdain, and surprise, with which

captain Cleveland had at first regarded her, gradually vanished, and was succeeded by one indicative of the deepest interest. But it would have been impossible for any one not utterly destitute of feeling, to have listened to her relation, to have seen the tears with which she pursued it, and not been affected. Interjections of pity, indignation, and astonishment, burst at intervals from the quivering lips of Cleveland as she proceeded, while alternately his manly cheek faded and flushed according to the feelings excited at the moment.

When she had concluded—"What a lesson," he cried, "against hasty judgments! Good God!" starting from his seat, and, as he paced the room with agitated steps, striking his forehead, "that I had not been so——" Then, as if from sudden recollection, checking himself, he turned to her, and enfolding her hands in his, protested, as he pressed them to his heart, that he should consider her regarding him as a friend the highest honour

that could be conferred on him.—"As to remaining here," he added, "set your mind at rest on that head. Grieved am I to think you should be compelled to solicit such a favour; but you must cheer up —even here we must believe that virtue meets with its merited reward."

Ah, no! not in this life was it that Fidelia now looked for any recompence for past sufferings: her tears gushed forth afresh; hope and expectation were dead within her bosom—all faith had been broken with her by those whom she loved; and whether her father lived to take her to another land, or was destined here to meet the termination of his sufferings, she should alike feel herself isolated and forlorn.

Cleveland looked as if he knew not how to offer consolation. After sitting a few minutes, apparently lost in thought, he suddenly started up, and saying he must be gone, hurried away ere she had power to repeat the acknowledgements she conceived his kindness merited.

His abrupt departure rather surprised her; but her mind soon became too completely occupied about her father to permit her to dwell long on it.

When she returned to his chamber, she found him so evidently worse, that he could scarcely bear to hear her speak: still, however, with an obstinacy she could not avoid thinking cruel, though she knelt to implore him to allow her, he interdicted her sending for any medical aid.

The day was by this time far advanced; and as evening darkened over the dismal scene without, her mind became still more gloomy and apprehensive. There was nothing to relieve it—no person to communicate her fears to—no one to ask advice or aid of. While the dreariness of all within seemed heightened by the dreariness of all without, the wide-weltering waves broke with more than usual fury on the shore—the wind raged with frightful violence, and as if driven by its force

against them, rain and hail beat at intervals against the windows.

Her heart sunk in the very depth of wretchedness, Fidelia was creeping to the bedside, to ascertain whether her father slept, when the sight of a letter in the hand of the girl, as she stood beckoning her at the door, arrested her steps, and drew her from the room.

With a presentiment of its being from Cleveland, she opened it. A glance at the signature proved to her that she was not mistaken; but of its purport she was not aware. It came to inform her, that circumstances had occurred that rendered it impossible to allow her father's longer continuance in the house; but that every precaution was taken, by having another habitation secured for him, to prevent his experiencing more than a temporary inconvenience by the removal; a carriage was dispatched for him, and a person would be on the spot to pay every requisite attention.

Fidelia was not a little surprised by this announcement, after what had occurred; such however was the opinion she entertained of Cleveland, that to some unavoidable circumstance, she was convinced, was owing the retracting of the promise he had given. This conviction, however, could not reconcile her to the circumstance, fearful as she was of the effect it might have upon her father. In this, however, as in many other instances, compelled to yield to necessity, she tried to collect herself to inform him of it.

Finding him awake, she proceeded to do so with as much caution as possible. All her efforts, however, to prevent his being agitated were ineffectual, and her distress was unspeakable.—"Well, well," he exclaimed, as he allowed her to assist him in preparing to depart, "there will at length be rest! The haven, I think, so long desired, is at length in view, and the long tempest-tossed wanderer will at last

pillow his head where there will be no interruption to his repose."

Every thing being ready for their departure, Fidelia extended her arm to assist his unsteady steps; but his exhausted strength required firmer support than she could give him, and she accordingly called to the man who came with the chaise. He immediately obeyed her call, and Fidelia was preparing to entreat he would be careful in assisting the invalid, when a glance she suddenly caught from beneath the large hat that shadowed his brows, arrested her voice, and made her start back in trepidation; but, no, it could not be—the fancy was wild and ridiculous. Yet she wished she could have another glimpse of his features; but this, except he chose it, which did not seem to be the case, by the manner in which he kept bending over her father, was not possible, the large coat, that completely hid his tall figure, being drawn up so high about his face as entirely to hide it.

Her father being seated in the chaise, he assisted Fidelia in after him; as he did so, she thought she felt him tremble: but this too might be fancy; yet she wished she could hear his voice, and accordingly made her anxiety to learn whither they were going a pretext for addressing him; but instead of replying himself to her question, he beckoned to another man, whom Fidelia now found to be in reality the driver.

To her question, however, she received no satisfactory answer from him; he merely replied—"Not far;" and the door being closed, both mounted the box together, and the chaise drove off.

A pitchy darkness had by this time veiled the sky, so that but for her ear, nearly stunned at times by the loud roaring of the waves, Fidelia would not have known the direction they took. At length, after a drive of about two hours, the carriage stopped, but at what kind of habita-

tion Fidelia could not discern. A door was opened by one of the men, and she and her father were assisted into a hall, which gradually became visible, an elderly woman advancing from a room at the bottom of it, to meet them with a light as they entered.

Glenmore by this time was so exhausted, that he could neither speak nor notice any thing: he was immediately conveyed to a chamber, where, as soon as he had come a little to himself, by means of some restoratives that were administered, he retired to repose, but without having regained sufficient strength to evince the curiosity it was but natural to suppose he felt as to where he was.

Through the fatigue he had undergone, he soon fell into a dose; and as soon as it was ascertained he was asleep, the woman, who had quite the appearance of a respectable housekeeper, entreated Fidelia to withdraw to another apartment, for the

purpose of taking the refreshment her trembling frame announced her so much standing in need of.

Sinking beneath conflicting feelings, Fidelia complied; but many minutes elapsed ere her fast-falling tears would allow of her accepting the proffered refreshment. But it was not merely from grief she now wept—she also wept from a sense of unreturnable obligation—from a feeling of mingled gratitude and pride. Every thing around her bespoke a habitation of a superior description; and for the first time it now struck her that the sudden retraction of Cleveland's promise, to allow her father to continue longer in the wretched dwelling in which he found him, was a stratagem to get him to one where every requisite comfort would be his. At the moment of reading his letter, she wondered this had not occurred to her; but the agitation she was then in, she concluded, was the reason. And to a stranger then must the representative of the proud and

once noble race of Glenmore be indebted for kindness, in probably his last moments! The thought was bitter; but surely, surely her aunt could not permit it, when acquainted with his exact situation; and accordingly she resolved on writing to her the ensuing day.

But while her anxiety to be relieved from obligations that oppressed her soul was uncontrolable, equally so was her impatience to express the gratitude such benevolence excited.

Ignorant whether he belonged to Ireland or not, she was of course ignorant whether the house was his; anxious, from various motives, to ascertain this, she inquired of her companion. The answer she received, however, was far from satisfactory—it was both confused and evasive; and seized with something like alarm at the circumstance, what she had before but faintly asked, she now pressed to know.

Finding she would be answered, the woman suddenly begged she would excuse

her for a few minutes; and without giving her time to reply, withdrew, leaving her in a strange state of perplexity. Yet she tried to believe it might be out of delicacy. Cleveland wished her to remain in ignorance on the subject; but it was absolutely essential to her feelings that this should not be the case; that deprived as she might be in the course of a few days—alas! a few hours! of the faint sanction she derived from her father's being with her, she should perfectly understand where she was. Again her tears gushed forth, at the cruel circumstances in which she was placed.

While indulging the anguish of her bursting heart, the door softly opened, and some one entered. Languidly she raised her head from the arm of the couch on which, her face covered with her handkerchief, she had rested it, to see who it was. But how impossible for words to express her surprise, her emotion at the moment, when instead of either Cleveland or her late companion, she beheld Grandison ap-

proaching towards her! Starting from her seat, she gazed wildly at him, as if doubting the evidence of her eyes, involuntarily shrinking back as he approached her.

"Is it thus I am received?" he reproachfully demanded. "Is it only to captain Cleveland Miss Glenmore wishes to be indebted for any attention?"

"Oh, good God! how—why is it I see you here?" exclaimed the almost-fainting Fidelia, sinking upon the nearest seat. "After the cruel——" But she timely checked herself from finishing the sentence, aware of the interpretation that must be put upon the reproach it would have conveyed.

"How!" he repeated, throwing himself at her feet, and alternately pressing her struggling hand to his lips and to his heart, while, blushing and confused at the narrow escape she had had from betraying her feelings, she averted her face from his gaze. "But the moment of explanation is now arrived," he added, "the moment that

will, I must flatter myself, terminate all the torturing anxieties so long endured."

He rose from his kneeling attitude, and placing himself beside her, quickly entered, still retaining her trembling hand in his, upon this explanation. But to enter more minutely into particulars than he could, we shall give it in our own words.

CHAPTER VI.

" Tho' plung'd in ills and exercis'd in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair:
When prest by dangers, and beset with foes,
The Gods their timely succour interpose:
And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
By unforeseen expedients bring relief."

CAPTAIN Cleveland was amongst the confidential friends of Fergus Dundonald. On a visit he paid him at his father's, he accidentally saw Fidelia, and was by him acquainted in confidence with the then sup-

posed affinity between them. On meeting her at Hammersmith, he instantly recognized her. From what he had previously heard, he could not help feeling a strong interest for her, and which he conceived it would be gratifying to his friend to evince; for though by this he knew she was no longer considered as his sister, he yet imagined that he must feel some little anxiety about a person that he had once regarded in that light. That she was utterly unworthy of any solicitude about her, he was quickly led to imagine, and accordingly, had no hesitation in writing to that effect to Dundonald, fully detailing the circumstances that gave rise to the belief.

This letter afforded Dundonald the most malicious satisfaction, from the hope it inspired of being enabled by it to force Albina to act in such a manner as might create a coolness between her and her lover, and thus ultimately perhaps prevent the marriage he disliked. Aware of the

warm interest which both Hastings and his mother took in Fidelia, he scarcely doubted that the slightest mark of indifference towards her by Albina would be resented by both, and he accordingly lost no time in setting himself to work, to compel her to act as he wished. Communicating Cleveland's letter to her, he protested nothing should prevent his publishing its contents, but her giving him a solemn promise to relinquish all farther intimacy or intercourse with Fidelia.

In vain she shrunk from giving this promise—in vain besought him not to urge her to act in a manner that, unexplained as must remain the motive for such conduct, could not fail of subjecting her to the imputation of ingratitude and caprice. He would not hearken to her; and rather than have Fidelia exposed to public obloquy, she consented to run the risk of lessening herself in the estimation of those she valued: but this was not her only cause for grief at being compelled to

do so. Spite of condemning circumstances, she felt an internal persuasion of Fidelia's innocence, that rendered her wretched at the thought of giving her up. Compelled to renounce her—to treat her as a being unworthy of notice, with mingled dread and sorrow she thought of encountering her again.

Unable in any way to account for her altered conduct towards her, to what strictures, she reflected, might it not expose her—to what bitter reproaches from Fidelia herself! Warm and affectionate in his own nature, in what a light might it occasion Hastings to view her, aware as he was of the debt of gratitude she owed her! But the very arguments she had recourse to, for the purpose of prevailing on Fergus to let her retract her promise, were, of all others, those that were calculated to render him inexorable to her entreaties—to create a coolness between her and Hastings, being what he ardently wished, from the hope, that if their meditated marriage

was broken off, the union that pride and ambition made him so solicitous for might be brought about.

The pain endured by Fidelia at the altered conduct of her friend, has been already related; but not the agonizing struggles of Albina herself at witnessing that pain, more especially from the prejudice she saw her conduct towards her gradually exciting in the mind of Mrs. Stovendale against herself. That Hastings would sooner have remarked on the circumstance, but for the manner in which his attention happened to be divided at the period, and when, at length, he did evince noticing it, her distress was inexpressible. What followed his expostulation on the subject, is already known; but though he soon succeeded in discovering whither her brother had removed her, Hastings hesitated, after his last conference with Fidelia, in availing himself of the discovery, confirmed in his previous belief by her assertions, of Albina's having acted a most ungrateful

part to her, and, of course, a most haughty and unjust one to him.

Things remained in this state for a few days, when an incoherent letter was received by Mrs. Stovendale from lady Oldbury, acquainting her that Fidelia had eloped from her protection with lord Castle Dermot. This letter was received while at dinner with the family-party, and being entreated to wave ceremony by the countess, and open it without retiring, the exclamation that burst from her on its perusal betrayed the information it conveyed. To remedy this regretted disclosure, a promise of secrecy was exacted from the party relative to it.

This party had that very day received an augmentation, by the arrival of lady Caroline Ayrcourt, the general, her husband, just returned from the continent, and Miss Slaney. The agitation of her ladyship on hearing the secession of her admirer, on whose account her present visit to Bath had alone been paid, was too

great for concealment, and quickly attracting the attention of the general, occasioned a stern inquiry as to the cause of it. Confused, confounded, she had only power to falter out, that it was owing to regret for Miss Slaney. This led to farther interrogations, the result of which was, his being completely deceived into a belief by the politic dowager, his mother-in-law—rejoiced at this opportunity of misleading him, from the rumours she yet dreaded his hearing—that lord Castle Dermot had lately been much in the parties of lady Caroline, in order to have opportunities of paying his devoirs to Miss Slaney, as she called upon that young lady to testify, and which, with affected tears, and equally affected bashfulness, she did.

To have a person so immediately under his protection trifled with, was, the haughty and arrogant general conceived, an indignity to himself, meriting chastisement, and, one way or other, he determined on

obtaining satisfaction for his conduct. From the different sentiments he heard, he was not sure that the carrying off Fidelia was not for the purpose of marrying her, and, as getting Miss Slaney fairly off his hands was a very desirable thing, he resolved on immediately setting out in pursuit of his lordship, lest otherwise he might not have it in his power to relieve him of the burthen. By indefatigable exertions, he succeeded in ascertaining the direction he had taken; but instead of continuing to follow him, he was misled by erroneous information to turn upon the steps of Glenmore and his daughter; and to him was owing the terrible alarm and subsequent sufferings that both experienced in Cumberland.

While he was posting on in this manner, the party he had left behind him were all suffering, in a greater or less degree, agitation and unhappiness, from the same circumstance that had so violently irritated him; but not to it alone was ow-

ing the uneasiness experienced by Hastings. Miss Clinton, who still continued at lady De Bellemont's, conceiving any longer silence respecting captain Cleveland's letter unnecessary, now mentioned it; and thus in justifying the conduct of Albina to Fidelia, proved to Hastings he had unwarrantably censured it. His remorse was aggravated by a dread of not being able to obtain her forgiveness for it —a dread that now induced him to entreat the interference of Grandison.

Smothering the anguish that was rending his own heart at the moment, at the total annihilation of all his own fond and flattering expectations, Grandison readily promised this. By this time they had learned of her removal, by her brother, to Miss Clinton's seat in Westmoreland, in order to have her more out of the way; but lest their being discovered in the neighbourhood ere they had obtained an interview with her should prevent what they wished, they made an invitation to join

a shooting-party at lord Borrowdale's in the vicinity, a young nobleman belonging to Grandison's regiment, a pretext for being there.

When Mrs. Stovendale had a little recovered from the shock imparted to her feelings by the communication of Miss Clinton, she decided on addressing a letter to lady Castle Dermot, of whose arrival just at the juncture at Bath, she also had been apprised, on the subject of it, with an earnest entreaty that she would exert herself to induce lord Castle Dermot to make every amends in his power to Fidelia, for the obloquy he had drawn on her, who, as an innocent girl, led into error through his artifices, and her niece, had a double claim upon her.

Lady Castle Dermot was a good deal surprised by the information contained in this letter. Far, however, was she from regretting the belief, that from it she saw was entertained, justly conceiving it would be a means of preventing the union of Fi-

delia with any other than the person she wished her allied to, if indeed it was owing to stratagem he had now got her into his power. That, as she suspected, this was the case, the explanation that ensued on the unexpected return of Fidelia, fully proved. More than ever anxious to attach her entirely to herself, from the discovery of her being the daughter of her regretted sister, after a short struggle between honour and selfishness, she decided on letting her still remain under the imputation of imprudence, artfully taking upon herself the task of explaining to her friends all that had lately occurred, lest otherwise every thing should be too satisfactorily accounted for. The garbled and confused statement she purposely gave, confirmed every injurious belief, and Fidelia was given up by all, as a being utterly unworthy of their regard. Their regret at her supposed dereliction was heightened by the necessity it also imposed on them, of also avoiding her father,

to whom their hearts dictated every kind attention and warm congratulation.

That a woman of reputed honour and feeling, so nearly allied to her too, as lady Castle Dermot, would have been capable, from any motive of doing her an injury, never once entered their imaginations, and accordingly no doubt arose to shake, for a moment, their belief in her ladyship's statement, so artfully had she worded it, as to lead them to imagine the alteration of lady Oldbury's will entirely owing to resentment at her indiscretion, thus in every way insinuating whatever had a tendency to confirm the opinion she wished established. Hence, to her cruel perfidy, was owing all that had disappointed, perplexed, and finally overwhelmed Fidelia and her father with anguish.

She could not avoid feeling some remorse for the sufferings she occasioned them; but tried to stifle the feeling, by thinking her motive excused her conduct. Had it been to prevent the marriage of

Fidelia with her son, then indeed she conceived it would not have been justifiable; but as she had no other view in it than to secure her rank and fortune by her alliance with him, she deemed it excusable.

But when a hurried letter from lord Castle Dermot, who, on discovering the advantage that was attempted to be taken of the manner in which he had entangled himself with Miss Slaney, hastened to the continent, arrived to inform her he had thought proper to avail himself of the partiality which the little divine widow of a French officer of rank had evinced for him, her false sophistry could no longer have effect. Disappointed in the hopes that had tempted her to degrade herself in her own estimation, she thought with equal shame and regret on her conduct. The alternative it reduced her to was agonizing; she saw she must either continue to writhe under the idea of having blighted the prospects of her niece, or else, by confessing the part she had acted, deprive

herself of all chance of ever being regarded by her.

While hesitating how to act, the meeting between Cleveland and Fidelia took place, and the disclosures that followed left her nothing farther to reveal. Aware, from the explanation of Fidelia, of the injury he had done her, Cleveland lost not a moment in hurrying from her to Rock Fort, to make atonement for it, by detailing the particulars she had given him, and, of course, the mistake he found he had been under with regard to her.

Hastings having persevered till an interview was obtained with Albina, an explanation had taken place between them, that rendered the tyranny of her brother any longer unavailing, who at length finding this, or rather that by persisting to evince a wish for preventing her marriage with Hastings, he should entirely lose the friendship of the Fitzossory family, thought proper at last to yield to circumstances; and the double nuptials, as previously set-

tled, took place; shortly after which, the bridal parties, with Mrs. Stovendale and Grandison, left England for Rock Fort; so that the friends most interested in the vindication of Fidelia were at this very time on the spot to receive it.

The feelings produced by the communication of Cleveland, it would be superfluous to dwell on. The plain, unvarnished, circumstantial tale he had just heard, was as simply narrated by him as it had been told by Fidelia, and occasioned an instant conviction of her having been most falsely accused and misrepresented; but checking the feelings that would instantly have hurried them to her, how to act became the consideration, from the danger that might accrue from any sudden surprise to Glenmore in his present state. At length it was decided to get him, without any explanation, to Rock Fort. The manner in which this was effected is already known; and Grandison having explained to the wildered Fidelia all that was requisite to

the relief of her wonder and perplexity, she quickly after found herself in the arms of those she most loved and valued.

But the glow of rapture was soon chilled in her still sorrowing and apprehensive bosom, by the precarious situation of her father. Oh, now, now when a prospect of happiness at length appeared, to have him snatched from her, would indeed be an aggravation of the grief his loss must occasion! but the continuance of her painful suspense was not of much longer duration. That aid, which he had hitherto so positively refused, shortly occasioned a favourable change in his disorder; and when, at length, the explanation that awaited him cautiously took place, the renovation of his spirits speedily effected a still greater.

In the meanwhile, a new claimant to the possessions of the late lady Oldbury had started up, in the person of a nearer kinsman. Though hopeless of ever profiting by her fortune, he had kept an eye upon her movements, and, in consequence, learn-

ing her dying intestate, and what had occurred upon her death, immediately proceeded to England, to take possession as heir-at-law, to the utter discomfiture of Peckham, who, from the obscurity in which poverty compelled him to live, had long supposed him dead. Exclusive of the pleasure derived from the disappointment of such a being, the accession of the other was a source of universal joy, from his very opposite character, a proof of which was afforded, by his immediately handing over to Glenmore the title-deeds of the long-alienated estate of his family, aware of their having been fraudulently obtained by the late Mr. Winterfield, and that the best proof of gratitude he could give to Heaven for the happy alteration in his situation was, by acting with honour and honesty to others.

Now, therefore, at last came that trial, which, of all others, is the most difficult for the human heart to bear with equanimity—"Joy's extatic trial" for Fidelia;

but she who had been meek and enduring in adversity, was not likely to be arrogant or over-elated in prosperity. Alas! of the frail nature of earthly bliss, what a proof had she in the sad story of her parents! the early fate of her mother, who, like a dew-drop on the rose she resembled, just sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven! But leaving it to the imagination of our readers to group the several characters in the way most agreeable to their respective fancies, we shall now beg leave to drop the long-raised curtain on our *dramatis personæ*, with a natural wish that they may not rise from the entertainment with any feeling of disapprobation.

THE END.

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